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SELF-CONTROL AND HOW TO SECURE IT

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SELF-CONTROL AND HOW TO SECURE IT

(L'ÉDUCATION DE SOI-MÊME)

BY

DR. PAUL DUBOIS

Professor of Neuropathology in the University of Berne; Author of "The Psychic Treatment of Nervous Disorders," "The Influence of the Mind on the Body," Etc.

Authorized Translation by Harry Hutcheson Boyd

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
NEW YORK AND LONDON
1910

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Published March, 1909

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Go forth, little book,
and choose thy company.
To adversaries, Respect;
To the indifferent, Pity;
To comrades, Greeting.

—(After de Töpffer.)

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

"Man is the only animal who does not know how to live," I said one day after listening to the grievances of my patients. It was not their suffering that called forth this irreverent dictum—irony would have been hateful—it was the frequent assurance that they were the authors of their own misfortunes; and not always they alone, but their relatives and their fellow men.

Far be it from me to reproach those who suffer; by what right shall we judge others? But, on examining the circumstances surrounding these unfortunates, I have often said to myself: "All this need not have been and should no longer be possible." A colleague to whom I submitted these reflections—commonplace by reason of being old and true—subscribed to my opinion, but immediately hinted that my ideas applied only to those nervous patients who since the discovery of neurasthenia crowd the physician's office. There was a shade of disdain in the smile of my interlocutor, himself in fine phys-

ical condition, and perhaps too confident of his own mental balance.

But, after all, my dictum does not refer to invalids alone; it applies to everybody; to us physicians equally as to our patients, to educators of all kinds as well as to their pupils.

When one considers the life of the mind, it becomes no longer possible to divide humanity into two classes, the sick and the well. Neurasthenia, of which one hears so much nowadays, is not a disease that attacks us like rheumatism or tuberculosis; it is the psychic form of human weakness that we owe to our natural and hereditary defects, to our badly directed education, to the vicious influences which act upon us during our entire physical and mental development. It is not a weakness of nerves such as the word "neurasthenia" implies; it is, above all, mental debility, and "psychasthenia" is the word to express it.

When hereditary and constitutional influences seem to predominate, the debility is accounted illness; it appears essentially physical because it manifests itself by functional troubles, by intellectual blemishes—the fore-

runner of moral decay. It is to the physician that these disinherited, these degenerates apply; for them the world has sympathy only when their suffering is at its height.

They are closer to us than you imagine, you who judge others severely and take pride in your own mental poise; remember that no man is a hero either to his physician or to his valet, or to those who know his private life. Each one of us has some defect due to heredity. Education itself plays an immense part in forming these pathological mental conditions; it spoils the judgment of those who call themselves normal and who imagine themselves in a position to cast a look of contemptuous pity upon their less fortunate brethren.

In the Carnavalet Museum in Paris is an autograph of Alexandre Dumas the Younger that is worth a whole treatise on philosophy. It says: "How does it happen that while children are so intelligent, men are so stupid." The witty author adds: "Education must be responsible for it." Yes, education is chiefly to blame; no other hypothesis is possible. It is indeed to various educational influences, in

the broadest sense of the word, to the influence of environment, that we must ascribe this gradual decadence we so often encounter. It is not occasioned by a natural growth of brutality, like that which renders adult animals less tame and more rebellious against education—although we cannot escape these secret promptings of the flesh—but is a dependent brutality, changeable, due to moral and intellectual contagion acting on cases variously predisposed by heredity and previous training.

The fact is, we do not learn how to think. Schools impart to us, ever more zealously, knowledge of which we can only use the smallest part; it burdens our memory, and only tempers our intelligence with a commonplace logic, which one would think ought to equip us for the struggle of life. This hothouse culture does not form our judgment; on the contrary, it troubles it by giving us ready-made opinions to digest, without teaching us to appreciate their accuracy.

If one considers the work of logical reflection in its apparent spontaneity, one might compare it to a game that consists in forming

a complete and regular circle by putting dominoes with the same numbers end to end. This work is possible only when the table is clear or when those already placed by the hands of others are in position. Now, from the first years of our existence, appointed dominoes are put into our game in an apparent order which is often nothing but disorder. Is it surprising that we do not succeed in completing our circle, in thinking logically?

These fixed counters, which make the work of thinking so difficult, are preconceived ideas, dogmas of all sorts, settled convictions, solidified, in a word, and obtruded upon us by those with whom we live—our relatives, so well-meaning but often so clumsy, friends whom we have chosen unwisely, the class in which we live, and socially all the world, to whose contagion we unwittingly lay ourselves open.

As sheep of Panurge, we copy our neighbours when it is futile or even bad to do so; we respect traditions in all departments without submitting them, for an instant, to criticism and reason. Thinking appears to be very tiresome.

He who every day is called upon to interview the mentally diseased who have so-called healthy relatives experiences painful surprises in finding how warped are the minds of individuals who are proud of their intelligence, and belong to recognised social and what are called governing classes! I have no intention whatever to speak here of present-day difficulties, of those political, religious, and social crises of which each generation exaggerates the importance, as if the world had just begun to go wrong. No; weakness of judgment has always existed since the world began—and this fact justifies the epigram of George Eliot, "We are born in a state of moral stupidity."

Now, judgment is just what we need in life—a clear view of things, enabling us to foresee the immediate and the future consequences of our acts.

We have this foresight when it is a question of protecting our material interests. What ingenuity do we not display in the pursuit of these benefits in reaching our goal! But when it is a question of our moral life, our conduct, we lose our power of judgment.

Two jolly scholars, whom I like to see at my house, returned from the country one day, and described with youthful enthusiasm the pleasure they had had. One of them smiled as if he had a good joke up his sleeve, and told in these words the day's adventure:

"In the forest we came to a pond, in the middle of which was a small island. 'I bet you can't jump that ditch,' said one of my sly companions, and the others urged me on with an eagerness I ought to have suspected. Sure of my ability, I accepted the challenge. I jumped boldly and landed in the middle of the island and turned triumphantly to my companions. To my surprise I saw them doubled up with laughter, and when I asked the cause they shouted in chorus, 'Now come back!' I hadn't noticed that the island was too small to allow me to get a start, and so I was obliged to wade ashore!"

Is not that a picture of life, of the thoughtless conduct we so often see? We throw ourselves into adventures, carried away by pleasure, by pride—in a word, by our passions—and we do not realize that if we get out at all it will only be with a splashing.

And while our scholar and his companions, and all who may have heard this tale, may look twice before jumping a ditch, we, on the contrary, seldom profit morally by our own experience, or by that of others; it seems as if we took pleasure in rolling in the mud.

"A scalded cat dreads cold water,"[1] we quote sententiously. Man does not seem to be as logical as the cat, or, if he is in theory, he rarely puts logic into practise. He alone, in spite of evident superiority, loses his way, falls into the same mistakes after having been punished a hundred times, and, when he suffers for his fault, accuses events, or his unlucky star, or reproaches others with having destroyed his happiness.

The physician—the most intimate of confessors—daily verifies this incredible blindness. Whatever may be his capacity for understanding evil, whatever his knowledge of the world, and what his accompanying scepticism in regard to virtue, he goes from wonder to amazement in hearing these confidences, and asks himself if he is dreaming.

[1] The English equivalent proverb would be "A burnt child dreads the fire."

If he were to betray professional secrets he would not be believed, or at any rate he would be accused of exaggeration.

When it is not a question of crime or criminals, but of every-day faults to which we all are accustomed, the physician is struck with the moral short-sightedness that determines most people's conduct and might well say, "Man does not see beyond his nose."

But the uneasiness left by these sad facts is soon softened for the physician, when, anxious in his rôle of educator, he tries to bring deluded unfortunates back into the right path. It is, this time, with a delighted surprise that he finds that all is not lost, and that the task of deeply influencing a person's mind is not impossible. Men are stupid, that is understood; everybody says it, and likes to repeat it, if it be only to emphasize an exception in one's favor. Yes, men are blind, and in this kingdom to be one-eyed confers but a sorry royalty. However, when one turns to the isolated individual, suffering and unhappy; when one surrounds him with a frank sympathy, and when, in order to lead him out of his wretchedness, one makes him think and

reason, one reverses this pessimistic sentence pronounced on the human mind. We find among the simplest people, poorly brought up, even among the deranged, a fund of logic and intelligence about things moral.

One then perceives that in the witty but disdainful judgments of so many writers there is an aristocratic presumption, and when one sees how few of these great thinkers know how to make their principles and their conduct agree, one is smitten with respect for the simple-minded as being near the truth. After saying that man is stupid and foolish, after having almost felt in one's soul the beginning of a decided aversion towards this being, so badly made, one comes to like him better all the time, and one ends by saying: "How intelligent and good we find him when we scratch the surface, when we bring to light his inner personality, and when we help to free his logic from the fetters which bind him!"

It has often been observed that the psychology of crowds is not simply the sum of individual psychologies—that the mind of man is no longer the same when he is alone as when

he is drawn into a whirlwind of surrounding impulses and ideas. This is a fact, and it is in great catastrophes, during strikes, revolutions, and warfare, that this moral stupidity is apparent. Egoism is displayed in its most hideous form, sometimes strangely mixed with the spirit of sacrifice, and one begins to doubt the possibility of social progress. But if man is thus influenced and suffers the contagion of example, it is by virtue of his suggestibility, of his credulity; therein is revealed his unfitness to judge for himself, to see his path clearly, and to point it out to others. He is lacking in moral education.

If the action exerted upon the mind of a person, treated separately, by the spoken word, were limited to a single man, the benefit derived would be great enough to warrant one in pursuing the investigation; but it is encouraging to think, much more so to affirm, that this influence does not stop there, that it spreads, and that by enlightening individuals, isolated or collected in small groups, one may hope to influence the mentality of crowds.

Like the grain of wheat planted in the

earth, the moral idea planted in the soul springs up; it develops and spreads like the ear that scatters its seeds broadcast, multiplying them indefinitely. When one has ascertained this increase of good grain carefully sown in well-prepared ground, one is no more discouraged than the farmer by the difficulties of the task; he unflaggingly tears out the deep-rooted furrow weed and knows how to increase the yield of his ground. Let us do like him. We all feel more or less strongly the necessity for getting rid of our faults, of cultivating our good qualities; above all, we like to lay upon others the arduous task of getting rid of their faults rather than of ours. Everyone would welcome with joy the moral progress of all humanity, but we all become discouraged in advance in thinking of the slowness of this culture, and the majority of men welcome with a sceptical smile every proposition of moral orthopædia applied to individuals or to crowds.

One cannot work in this state of mind for the common weal. On the contrary, one must, above all, believe in the possibility of improvement in the human soul, and cultivate

each plant with untiring patience, contemplating in advance the precious harvest. Then one does not stop in one's labour; it becomes not drudgery but a delight, and one finds in this work present happiness and hope for the future.

I

THE CONQUEST OF HAPPINESS

I

THE CONQUEST OF HAPPINESS

And why this great zeal, this continual anxiety to improve one's own mind, to influence that of others? It is simply to procure the greatest possible amount of happiness in this world.

The sole motive for every action of man is *the desire for happiness.*

We have affirmed self-preservation to be the primitive instinct of every creature endowed with instincts. This is not always true. Animals are dominated by the sexual instinct, by the desire for instant possession, which is stronger than hunger or thirst; it is during the rutting season[1] that animals show the most stubborn indifference to ill treatment. In man the desire for happiness is so much to the fore that he often prefers death to the loss of what he considers his happiness. To

[1] The original is "*la poursuite amoureuse,*" which is difficult to translate at all literally in reference to animals without appearing absurd.

be fit physically, intellectually, or morally is the sole aim of every human creature, and whatever may be the mind, conduct, opinions, or aspirations of the individual, at the bottom of his soul will always be found this primitive desire for happiness. The question is to know where to look for this joy for which humanity is athirst.

Philosophers are ready to answer us, to instruct us on the meaning of life, to show us the goal, the prize, sometimes by depending upon the dogmas of a revealed religion, sometimes by building a theory of life upon a scientific basis. Further, the metaphysicians dare to raise the veil of the beyond and tell us their most fantastic dreams about immortality.

I scarcely care for these attempts to unveil the unknowable, as long as no one is qualified to know more than another. How much better I like this Dominican of Freiburg, Switzerland, Weiss, who devotes an excellent volume to "The Art of Living."[1] This is the

[1] "Die Kunst zu leben," von Fr. Albert Maria Weiss. O. Pr., Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Herdersche Verlagshandlung 1901.

kind of book we need. Life has only one aim, he says—to be lived, and it is an art to live it well, to draw from it that sum of happiness for which the world desperately strives, from the voluptuary who so easily loses his way, to the religious or philosophical idealist who, in a radiance of light, sees love in his path.

With an almost worldly enthusiasm that one would not look for under a cassock, our author-monk acknowledges all that we owe to the scientific work of the nineteenth century, but he immediately sobers us by remarking that all this progress has in no wise brought peace and happiness to the poor world. Who will dare to contradict him?

The fact is, man does not see clearly enough before him the road that leads to happiness. He almost entirely seeks it in the immediate and complete satisfaction of his desires, in material and intellectual pleasures, in ease, in comfort, and in fortune; and we have so closely identified these two ideas of pleasure and happiness that we commonly speak of fortune's favourites as the privileged class. Go into the homes where luxury reigns, or even culture of mind, where every-

thing seems made to add charm to life, and you will often find unhappiness; perhaps even greater than in the huts of the poor. As the good Abbé Gaime said to the youthful J. J. Rousseau: "If each man could read the hearts of others, more people would prefer to come down than to rise in the world." In a clever lecture the Italian socialist leader, Enrico Ferri, explained, in very moderate language, the claims of the fourth estate, and remarked that the desired progress would be brought about by evolution, if the governing classes favored the movement, but, if they persisted in their resistance, by revolution. He added: "Ladies and gentlemen, when I speak of the improvement of the lot of the working classes, I do not mean individual happiness—that is a matter of temperament. There are fellows in rags who don't know where they will dine to-night, but who are happier than kings, if kings *can* be happy; there are, on the contrary, those who have everything they can wish for, but who are profoundly unhappy."

Real happiness is not in the realization of desires, however legitimate they may be.

Doubtless all the privileges we owe either to the chance of birth, to luck in life, or to personal efforts bring us great satisfaction, fleeting happiness, and there is no man unable to say some time: "I am content, happy; my business is good, my position suits me, I have health, family joys," etc. But these blessings are partial, dependent, and passing; we have not yet reached happiness.

It is lawful to seek after all these advantages, and this ambition is the primal condition of progress; it is this wish to arrive which loosens our energies. Success gives power for good as well as for evil, and this idea suggested to a French Dominican a sermon on the strange subject "Become Rich."

But if there is one obvious fact, it is the frailty of these partial blessings: one's fortune is lost; scientific, literary, and artistic notoriety fades with time, even when it resists the disparagement of envious competitors; in politics the Tarpeian rock is always by the side of the capitol; health declines, and happiness, friendly, conjugal, or paternal, becomes frail like the rest; we either lose those we love, or, more sorrowful still,

we see them, either by their own fault or by the cruel necessity of existence, attacked by physical, intellectual, or moral disease. Follow families and individuals in their life, in the main so short, and you will see time and misfortune go in and out of their homes and prevent the establishment of lasting joy among the majority of men. Does happiness, then, not belong to this world? Must one give up at the first onset, soothing one's self with the hope of eternal bliss, which will at last compensate for the injustice of destiny from which we all suffer? It would seem so, and yet I cannot believe in this terrestrial discouragement.

Among the vicissitudes of our life too many are avoidable—those for which we are responsible—for us to have the right to fold our hands and reserve our hopes for celestial joys. There are without doubt calamities that reach us, that trouble our life and which we are powerless to exorcise; but they will always befall poor humanity. Shall they necessarily destroy our inner happiness? No.

While one sees many people who are afraid to live, who despair at the smallest failure,

and who are unhappy, there are souls who bravely endure many ills, including poverty, the death of those who belong to them, and the ruin of all their hopes. Multiplied misfortunes fall upon their shoulders, but their inner happiness remains unshaken; they do not take refuge in a disdainful stoicism which would be a loss of feeling, but in a hidden content, which is their greatest possession.

It is possible, and even probable, that people who live an intensely religious life are often able to acquire this supporting spirit. Have they not to sustain them—and that may lessen the value of this virtue—the hope of unutterable rewards? But gifted souls are not so carried away by their dreams, and do not particularize the aim they pursue; they act spontaneously, by an intuition which enables them to discover happiness where others cannot see it—it is the way they feel; that is all.

One may recognise the same disposition, the same power of moral existence in people who have never dreamed of accepting a belief, or even in those whose reflections and experiences in life have led to *agnosticism;*

that is to say, to that rational scepticism that forbids us to give to suppositions the character of certainties, however agreeable they may be. Yes, we have the right to pursue, without useless scruples, everything that can satisfy our desire for material and spiritual well-being; we ought to work in our own interest, and in that of others, to improve the lot of humanity, and the progress due to science can contribute to it in large measure. Well-being is not an evil in itself, and it is not by keeping humanity in a state of mediocrity that one may contribute to its happiness; it is, on the contrary, by a constant economical development—I do not say on account of this development—that moral and intellectual progress is made.

But let us beware of placing all our happiness on cards liable to be shuffled at any moment by others' hands or blown away by the least wind. It is this point of view that gives me only a very moderate confidence in the benefits of civilization, so long as it only brings us material advantage, greater comfort in our homes, better food, and more cheerfulness of spirit, however noble they

may be. Happiness is not there; it dwells in the deepest part of us, in our inmost ego; it can only have its existence in the most complete of our ideal aspirations, in the worship of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.

This state of soul can be created only by a constant training of our moral ego. We never reach this perfection, but at least we travel the road that leads towards it; and our happiness, the only true, the unattackable, is in direct proportion to our moral development.

However great may be the tremendous work of man, which, thanks to his intelligence and his unwearying labour, has surprised many secrets of nature, has subdued the natural forces to make them serve his ends, he remains in that unhappiness he himself has created; his misery seems even more cruel when contrasted with the riches accumulated by science and human industry.

For those who think, there is no possible happiness apart from the ethical development of human personality. Now, it is evident that the virtues, the observance of which, according to religious doctrines, ought to assure us felicity in a future life, are precisely

those which will give us the most happiness on this earth. It is a curious thing that man disregards this evident truth, or, a still greater mistake, from the start declares himself incapable of realizing this aspiration. This development of moral personality is only possible by the *education of self*. Every step we take along this road contributes to our happiness and involves those who, willingly or unknown to themselves, come under our influence. Thus are multitudes educated, and individual progress alone is able to lessen the signal antinomy between the mentality of collected human beings and that of the isolated individual. To arrive at this necessary development we have no other means than thought. It is the only light that enables us to illumine the way.

II

THOUGHT

II

THOUGHT

Then, one will say, we need will and energy, and we require to use these forces in that moral liberty which makes man superior to animals. I should like to content myself with these established expressions, and speak as the world speaks. I believe I have no tendency to oddity, and the spirit of contradiction which everybody has does not seem to be abnormal in me.

But words are only the labels of thoughts, and it is dangerous to use them without thoroughly knowing what they represent. In applying one's self to their analysis one finds that the label does not always correspond to the contents. There are words that have preserved throughout the ages the meanings they had at their beginning; they then served only to designate a fact without explaining causes. On the contrary, there are expressions that have been corrupted from their original meaning. Frequent overhauling was

necessary for these words. Besides, words are elastic, and become distorted in the mind of each person under the pressure of word-ideas which pre-exist in the understanding of the thinker.

We use our legs without knowing anything of anatomy or of the physiology of the organs of locomotion; we use our eyes very well without understanding the laws of optical physiology, yet this science is of great help to us in correcting the faults of our eyesight. On many subjects man also thinks very wisely without having any notion of psychology; but the mechanism of thought is much more complicated than that of the eye. If one ventures on the ground of moral analysis, it becomes necessary to understand the instrument one uses—reason—and to have previous knowledge of the words one uses. From this point of view let us examine the word "thought."

Man is strangely deluded when he imagines himself able to think of what he wishes. No man, however accomplished he may be, in my opinion, has ever had a personal thought or has originated an idea from his

noble brow. Thought, however complicated, it may be, only results from an association of ideas that in no wise comes under the yoke of a sovereign will. Our thoughts force themselves upon us, succeed one another in our mind, without our being able to change their order; we drive out those that are importunate or retain those which give us pleasure. They all come from chance excitement, physical or psychical; from the outside, intrinsic by reason of their relation to our inmost ego, even when this excitement is organic. We do not direct our thought, excitement is what brings it to life. The ideas which come to us are the fruits of personal experience, of that which others transmit to us by word or letter, by all the means of expression which our five senses give us. *Nihil est in intellectu quod non erat in sensu* remains the fundamental proposition of psychology.

We do not, then, think by ourselves in the strict meaning of the word; we assist, I dare to say, passively, in the working of our mental kaleidoscope, in which the pictures succeed one another under the influence received from outside shocks. The movement started con-

tinues during wakefulness, follows us into sleep in the form of dreams, and we are no better able to check this continual flow of thoughts during the day than during the night. The direction and force of this current only depend upon the obstacles it finds in its way, by the condition of previous ideas stored in our memories, and which are born haphazard of actual experience. Whether it be a question of a common pun or of an idea of genius, we recognise for every thought this concatenation, necessary and independent of us.

The idea I am expressing is so foreign to the ordinary mind that I am obliged to explain it, although I consider it to be a truth of La Palisse.[1] For example: Two young men are obliged, by the necessities of existence, to rise at seven o'clock to go to work. Both awake by reason of little-known influences (sufficient rest for the body, habit, previous autosuggestions, excitement caused

[1] Monsieur de la Palisse est mort,
Il est mort de maladie,
Un grand quart d'heure avant sa mort
Il était encore en vie.

by daylight, the noise made by others rising, etc.), which register the state of sleep or of wakefulness. On opening their eyes, they are by no means free to think of anything in particular—about the Grand Turk, for instance. Their thoughts are directed, without the interference of a wish, upon the objects of their previous preoccupations and are governed by haphazard circumstances. One of them observes that it is already daylight; immediately the idea is created, Have I slept too long? This troublesome idea is not wanted; it obtrudes itself. By association of ideas the person is obliged to look at his watch, and as soon as he finds he is late, he jumps out of bed as if moved by springs. The young man would perhaps rather not obey this psychical reflex, but it is created by reason of previous education, from the fixed idea that he must go to his work; we explain this by saying that he obeys the consciousness of duty. The other young man has also looked at his watch, but he has not reacted; he has gone back to bed; the feeble sense of duty, the lack of interest in his work have prevented reaction. He will sleep peacefully

while the other would have been unable to stay another minute in bed. In both of them the action of thought will continue without their being able to check its course. The path these associations of ideas will follow is impossible to foresee; it will depend at the same time upon chance events, preconceived ideas which existed in the mind of the person, and the feelings which disturb him at the very moment of contingent excitement.

These ideas link themselves together, determine acts, and these associations are brought about so involuntarily that we are often surprised at the path they have followed, and so in conversation we often ask the question, "How did we come to speak of that?"

Another example: At some time or other our pride has been hurt; we believe we are resigned to it, we affirm this in all sincerity, and then the meeting with somebody or other, a name spoken, calls forth remembrance. We experience a sharp moral pain, and perhaps for hours we are pursued by sad, insistent thoughts, even while recognising that our preoccupation is useless and exaggerated, and

that we would rather think of something else. We can no more stop the idea than the feeling which follows it; it is not will that we can oppose to this constant movement, to this interminable succession of mental pictures, always born of outside excitement; it is another mental attitude which steps in, and interposes itself, without our having the power to evoke it. Daily, when our thought is brought back to one of our actions, we are obliged to say to ourselves, "I ought not to have done that." And when some one blames us for not having obeyed this or that consideration, we reply: "What do you expect? I did not think of it; the idea did not come to me." Sometimes we are answered harshly enough: "That is just it, you should have thought of it." It is easy enough to say this afterwards, but at the time it was absolutely impossible, since at the moment of action the idea had not come to us. The only thing to do is to take notice, now that our attention has been called to the point, of the thing we ought to have done—not to torment ourselves with useless reproaches, but to do better the next time. In conversation we

often have what is called "hall-door wit"; that is to say, we only find in going out of a house the witty reply we should have made to some joke or other; the idea did not come to us sooner.

The same thing happens to us in our psychic life; either the moral ideas that slumber in us have not been sufficiently fixed by education, or the chance event, depending upon others, did not happen in time to change the course of our association of ideas. We would often have acted otherwise if the letter of a friend had not been kept back by circumstances absolutely independent of our will. The papers gave an account of the suicide of a Russian consul in London. In his last throes a letter was read to him that removed the anxieties which had occasioned his act of despair. "Too late," he murmured, and died. A woman suffering from melancholia, haunted with the desire of suicide, climbs upon the tower of a cathedral, steps over the balcony, and is about to throw herself into space. She sees some children playing at the foot of the tower; fearing to hurt or to frighten them, she gives up this method

of suicide, and a few minutes later throws herself into the river. Does this mean that our conduct depends only upon quite fortuitous circumstances? No, it depends both upon events and ideas, mental pictures which pre-existed in our understanding and which will be revealed by the involuntary action of thought. But these ideas, these moral principles have been inculcated by other persons, and we here recognise the chances of life, of our education.

It has been said very truly that there is no such thing as chance; this is evident in the sense that everything which happens has its motive. The workman who carelessly throws a tile from the roof acts by reason of his association of ideas, and I, passing in the street, am impelled by some other motive, but there is chance in the coincidence of the two facts, which were not associated by any necessary relation of cause to effect and might have happened a thousand times without coinciding.

Thought, then, is not spontaneous, does not result from an interior effort of the man who thinks; it is involuntary, automatic; ideas fall

like tiles on our head; but experience can teach us to avoid walking below roofs under repair. It is not that we shall not wish to pass by; it is that association of ideas has created a salutary fear, and you would be obliged to use force to make a person take a path he has found to be dangerous. We must, then, understand the danger, and here again we have only one teacher, experience.

An example will make this automatism of thought easily understood. Imagine a flat surface on to which the passers-by continually throw little balls. They are arranged by chance—that is to say, without order—by reason of the very impetus they have been given; they will follow the straight path and will stop only when their force is spent. These little balls are mental representations created by fortuitous stimulus. The surface without borders represents the understanding of a person without any preconceived idea, an absolutely impossible phenomenon. There are, however, many people who have very few ideas planted in the field of their conscience; these are the impulsive people who follow every impression like a weather-

cock every breeze. It is the anarchy of thought. Border this flat surface with four elastic walls like the cushions of a billiard-table, and the disorder will grow less. Balls thrown upon it will no longer be placed by chance; there will be fewer near the borders, for those thrown without force will stop before reaching the cushion and those that touch it will rebound towards the centre. Add to this surface some cushions running obliquely, like the dams of a river; order will succeed disorder; the balls thrown by the passers-by from no matter where, and with no matter what force, will be caught in the canals, and will follow the same path as if they had been poured into a funnel. The mind of man who has only cultivated his thought a little—that is to say, who has not been brought up by experience—resembles the billiard-table with four cushions. There is a certain logic in his association of ideas; there are even supernumerary cushions, but badly placed, which are his prejudices, his ready-made opinions, mechanically stored by the pressure of environment, by bad education.

Finally he who, by reason of his native intelligence, the wise advice he has received from his relatives and friends, by reason of those contingencies of life to which we are all subject, has properly distributed his cushions—that is to say, his moral principles—will find his mental life well ordered. His association of ideas will follow one another in logical order, will produce normal actions, adapted to the only goal of man, happiness, in its broadest meaning, on this earth or in another existence. This means that we must have cushions in our field of thought, governing principles, against which casual thoughts will collide, thrown into our understanding by chance; these last must be deflected when they have been badly thrown, must be narrowed into a single direction, in the sense of propitious ethics, not only towards ourselves and our neighbours, but humanity as a whole.

We do not make these cushions; they are given us by universal experience, and if we arrange them in our understanding, it is because these ideas have a powerful attraction for us. The illusion of liberty, frequent in the man who does not reflect upon the reason

of things, is especially shown when he applies his thought to a continuous work which exacts effort. Even those who have understood determinism in a certain measure, who have seized the fortuitous character of our successive thoughts, answer, "Your affirmation is too absolute; we can put a certain order into our thoughts; thus, when we give up an hour to work out an algebraical problem, we direct our thought in a determinate manner; we put aside all other ideas which come to trouble the chain of our reasoning." Apparently this is true, in the case of continued work as in that of fleeting thought, if one does not think of the inner bondage. We do not voluntarily fix our attention; it is directed by the very attraction of work which we say we control and which, on the contrary, controls us.

It is necessary, for a clear understanding of determinism, to thoroughly grasp the domineering character of the motive that determines our action. Let us stop for a concrete example. One evening I began to read a literary work that interested me. The next morning, on waking, associations of for-

tuitous ideas brought this subject to my memory. The attraction was renewed and I wished very much to give some further time to reading. However, scruples took possession of me; occupied with other work, it seemed to me better to read something more directly useful, and then I became unsettled. Suddenly I saw a large envelope on my table; it contained a medico-legal report that I ought already to have delivered. This sight awoke remorse, for the delay to this work might have a disastrous effect on the person who was the object of my report. This feeling became so strong that it cut short my desire for literature. I had to become busy, and for hours to concentrate my thought on this work. This work was not itself the determining attraction; it was possibly wearisome, and occasionally the vision of pleasure I should have had in reading the novel fluttered like a butterfly round my head and troubled me. But immediately this picture was replaced by another, by that of necessity, of duty, even by the idea that I could only enjoy this reading after having set in order this important business. The attraction exists precisely in obe-

dience to the various motives of moral order. My concentration, provided it were not prevented by intellectual fatigue, would be in proportion, not to free thought, but to the dominant character that I recognise in these motives. One day I am able to appreciate them at their proper value, and I endure my task; another day I find a thousand excuses for putting it off until the morrow.

We find ourselves always active and not passive, in any kind of work, whether it be in a fleeting thought, betrayed by a movement, or in continued and persistent work. We are free, in the corrupted meaning given by the public to this word; philosophically speaking, we are slaves of the motives forced upon us by reason of our character.

So there are many people from whom one never can get the promised work, and who render their own existence unfortunate by unfitness. The "Fragments d'un journal intime" of Henri Frédéric Amiel throws a tragic light upon these undecided minds, in whom motives never reach the maturity that would render them efficient. If we wish to be exact in determinist speech, we should say

that there are people whose existence is made unhappy by their faults. But it is useless to suppress reflexive verbs and replace them by passive ones. If one puts a finger in one's eye, one alone is the cause of the tears that follow, however involuntary the movement may have been. That is why we do not think of avoiding in these pages all expressions which might create an idea of liberty, of personal blame; it is sufficient to understand the nature of these thought phenomena. Man judges by his feelings, even in the making of religious conceptions; he has always given some human defects to his gods, has made them act under the spur of jealousy, vengeance, anger; he has made them slaves of their mental representations, of the feelings they produce. From an anthropomorphic point of view, from which the human soul has never been able to rid itself, man has made his gods in his own image. Christianity, it is true, delivers its one God from human weakness; it no longer endows Him with the bursts of passion of the Olympian gods, but it leaves Him, in certain conceptions, still held together with the ugly feeling of anger, not only the

legitimate dealing with wrong, but the allotment of eternal punishment.

The moral principles that we have established in our mind do not always represent very solid cushions; they often yield under the pressure of too large balls thrown with too much force, which are our own impulses of passion. It only remains for us to take note of the disorder, repair our cushions, fit them more firmly, not by free will, which I maintain cannot exist, but by a clear view of things, gained by our own experience, helped by that of others.

These facts, easy to prove and to analyze, show the determinism that rules the mechanism of our thought; they explain the cause of things, without this explanation changing at all the fact of our mental life. The day that Galileo announced that the earth turned round the sun, nothing had changed in the reciprocal displacement of the two heavenly bodies, the earth did not wait for the decision of the tribunal of the Inquisition. Equally, from the beginnings of human thought, philosophers like Socrates have understood the idea of moral determinism; man has con-

tinued to think and to do good or evil. He has thought worse for being ignorant of the mechanism of thought; the neglect of these principles of psychology renders him less indulgent to the faults of others, without making him severe enough towards himself.

III

THE ACT

III

THE ACT

Most of my interlocutors have replied that it is evident that our thoughts are oftenest awakened by quite fortuitous impressions, by events independent of us, by reminiscences; it is clear we cannot of ourselves evoke an idea; it forces itself upon us; it is created by being linked to the idea that preceded it; it clashes with pre-existent ideas that it has awakened from their sleep. It is easy to suppose that automatic mechanism establishes the necessary succession of our thoughts. But is it the same with all our thoughts? Are there not some still more primitive, which are in us and which we would be able to throw into the involuntary current of ideas, like a master who, after having let his pupils wander off into dreams, would recall them to the way they should go. We cannot deny a priori the possibility of the fact; that is to say, the existence of will. But to me it seems to play a very small part; and

the simple and every-day fact that our ideas are created in an involuntary succession at least authorizes the presumption that there is a general rule for it. It is for those who contend that there are exceptions, that there are voluntary ideas, to prove the fact. Now I defy any one to point out this exception to me. Examine each of your present ideas, of your actual mental representations, and you will always recognise either the fillip that set them loose, such as fortuitous events, or the old idea that has swerved the first impulse, the moral principle that springs up in us because it is quite naturally associated with the preceding idea. The last objection which is opposed to the determinism of thought is that anyhow we all have the power of choice, of decision, to yield to a motive or to resist it—that we have, in a word, free will. Yes, certainly, we appreciate the value of motives, and when we act we have so decided from the first; and we consider ourselves free when we find no outside opposition to the realization of our resolutions. If these expressions, liberty and free will, are only to show the possibility of judging without hin-

drance from others, there is no objection to using them.

But let us analyze more deeply what passes in our minds. Are we masters because we hold a certain opinion on a subject, because we modify it by the interference of free will? No.

We all feel how much we preserve the moral imprint of our education, what trouble we have to avoid preconceived opinions, how much we let ourselves be influenced by feelings in judgments which would gain by being treated more rationally. Nothing is rarer than independence in regard to outside suggestions; and we do not know how to save ourselves from them even when we perceive that we come under their influence. We do not think enough about the yoke inside, the result of ideas so thoroughly adopted that they seem like our own. That is what Spinoza meant when he said, "Men think themselves free only because they get a clear view of their actions, they do not think of the motives that determined them."

As soon as desire wakes in us, it strains towards its immediate realization; and the

action, thought of necessarily and unavoidably, is accomplished if nothing happens to hinder the movement. What stops it or changes its direction is not a force put in motion by us, a wish, but the apparition in the field of consciousness, due to an association of ideas, of a contrary mental representation. A struggle takes place between the two adversaries under our eyes. We have distinctly the feeling that it is our place to award the prize, but we forget that to this judgment we bring our character, our prejudices; that, in a word, we judge with our head, and that it is not we ourselves who have done it.

We make our choice among ideas as we choose a hat; that is to say, without being compelled by others, but guided by our own taste. There are people who have bad taste, and I am of the opinion that they cannot help it.

Between the desire and the action it entails the way may be free, and then the transformation from the idea into act is achieved immediately and inevitably. But obstacles often arise, ideas which break in upon the circle of our associations, either from having

already been present in our memory by reason of previous education, or having been forced upon us by the advice of our fellow men.

Man has often been compared to scales that tip towards the side containing the greater weight. The illustration is not quite correct. The material balance is always towards that side where weight is greater; this weight is reckoned by kilograms, a measure invariable and obligatory for every one. The balance of human intelligence is towards that side where the weight appears to be greater. It is as though the scale at the point of its indicator had a little head conscious of its movements, which would say at each oscillation: "I dip to the right because the weight in the right scale seems to me to be the heavier." Now each little head of these human scales is made differently from the others, by reason of hereditary disposition and the education received; it can only judge with what it has; if it is a Chinese head it might dip to the left, while one of ours would dip to the right.

Starting from the conception of will power,

we often speak of moral effort. In determinist speech this effort is only the painful indecision that seizes our thinking ego when heavy weights load the scales to the point of bending the beam.

Apply these data to an imaginary case: On a hot day three persons are walking along a dusty road, bordered with vines; they are thirsty and wish to eat some grapes. The first person has been well brought up, and respect for the property of others is so well rooted in him that it acts automatically. He would be careful not to touch this tempting fruit and would look for the wine-grower to buy his grapes from him; if he did not find him he would endure his thirst; that is, in him the sense of right appears stronger than his feelings. The second person is less particular, always by reason of his education in the broadest sense of the word. He has already picked the grapes and is about to eat them without scruple; the sense of right appears that moment to weigh less than the attraction of pleasure. But he has seen his more scrupulous companion; the idea of respect for the property of others is awakened in time,

and we see the second man following the example of the first. The third pedestrian is a youth; he understands nothing of the state of mind of the two others; he shrugs his shoulders at their honesty; he pockets the picked grapes and will eat them on the spot with the utmost tranquillity of mind. In him the path between the desire and the act was smooth and free from obstacles. In the second pedestrian, the moral bar was only raised by the contagion of fortuitous example, for these persons were walking along the same road by chance. In the case of the first pedestrian, the sight of the fruit awakened an old idea, the moral sense of right, which slumbered deep within him. Can one say that all three were right? Not at all; the first alone was right. Can one say that they will all act similarly on subsequent occasions? Not at all; the second, who recognised his fault, may have had the idea of honesty strengthened in him; it may also happen that the idea becomes weakened, and that he will act badly at another time; everything depends upon the influences that determine him. No one can foresee by what motive he will be-

come involved—the motive of feeling or that of moral right. Our youth may also retain the idea that he is "smart," and from a marauder become a thief and a criminal. He may have the luck to meet a man of sense who will say to him, "Would you like us to take something belonging to you?" "Oh, no, I should be very angry at it." "Well, why do you do to others what you would not like them to do to you?" I am quite aware that this attempt at moral orthopædia might have no good result, and that the youth might even joke about it among his friends. But are you sure that he will always be like this? In any case, it is worth while to try this work of conversion. Oh, you will say, but this is an appeal to his will; I call it an appeal to his shrewdness, which is not the same thing at all.

Apply this analysis to all the acts of your life or to those of others, to the small decisions of daily life as well as to the moral events of criminality, and everywhere you will find the same mechanism—an uninterrupted succession of thoughts associated by some bond or other, the appearance of an idea creating a desire, quick transformation of this impulse

into action if a contrary mental presentation does not occur; that is to say, if another motive for feeling or of reason does not oppose the first impulse. It is indeed the individual who weighs the motives and finally determines their decisive value, but to do so he uses his own weights; his valuation will depend upon his previous mentality, which he cannot create and which he has received from heredity and education.

Let us take an example of the criminal sort. An Italian workman settles in our country. He has the qualities of his race; he is a worker, economical, sober, and sends regularly to his family the product of his rough labour. But he has warm blood; the knife is quickly unsheathed in his country; he is without education, and his religion, if he has one, only shows itself in superstitious practices, it has no influence on his moral life. One day a comrade makes a joke that wounds his personal or national pride, and our friend fatally stabs his adversary. In this individual there was no moral obstacle between the keen desire for vengeance and the criminal act; the latter was accomplished as a reflex action.

Immediately afterwards the murderer will regret his act, either because a moral sentiment slowly enters his mind and creates remorse —that has happened—or, because on being put into prison, he will have a commonplace fear of the punishment awaiting him. The crime committed is the necessary result of a meeting of fortuitous circumstances—life in another country, the meeting with a joking comrade, perhaps the momentary influence of drunkenness—and more lasting causes—insufficient education and moral development.

The celebrated Charcot said that to create nervousness two factors were necessary: one permanent, the neuropathic predisposition, and the other contingent, the instigating agents. One may say the same of crime, great and little; it is due to a permanent cause, primitive mentality, and to contingent causes, which are the various events of life.

We, who are endowed with another sort of mind than this Italian workman, do not react in the same way. However deeply our pride may be hurt by a joke, the idea of defense would not reach homicidal intention, and were it born in a passionate soul it would

be checked rather by moral considerations than by fear of the police.

Does this mean that the man ought to remain unpunished under the pretext that, having reacted in the way he was able to do at the moment his anger was awakened, he is beyond reproach? Not at all; his act is contrary to the welfare of society, which has the right to repress him, even to punish him, as much to waken in the guilty person moral clear-sightedness which was lacking as to give a salutary warning to those who would be tempted like him to obey the simple motives of feeling.

We cannot recall the past; it has been what it has been. We know it could have been different if the criminal had had moral principles, if he had cared for moral beauty or, simpler still, if he had seen at a glance the remote consequences of his act; his imprisonment, the grief and destitution of those belonging to him; the wrong done to others; in fact, it is scarcely credible that a man should never think it wrong to do to others what he does not wish them to do to him. But, alas, all this did not come into the mind

of this murderer! After an offense, after a mistake, the future alone interests us; and that is why, for the repression necessary, we must consider at the outset the educative task incumbent upon society.

There is a strange misapprehension in the mind of the intelligent public upon this question of criminality, and an unjustifiable distrust is shown towards modern theories. The exaggerations of Lombroso have contributed to this, and many people watch with anxiety the recurrence of criminal conventions. We joke about them, saying that they are "truly criminal." Why? Because they aim at proving that the bodily, intellectual, and moral defects in a great number of criminals indicate a predisposition to crime, that the term "born criminal" is too positive an expression. There is no born criminal, predestined from the first to crime, but there are undoubtedly individuals who owe to atavism, to heredity, to degeneracy caused by alcoholism and poverty, a special mentality, a more or less complete absence of moral sentiments. This amorality is so closely bound to the constitution that it shows itself physically in the bru-

tality of expression, in the prognathism of the face, by the low or sloping forehead, by innumerable malformations of the bony system and of various organs that have been styled "marks of degeneracy." Long before the anthropologist savants, the general public had seen these "criminal heads" in the court-rooms without catching the determinist idea that emphasized this observation.

These beings are wild beasts; they may remain inoffensive if circumstances do not happen to awaken their instincts; one sees worthy people having the heads of criminals. But when the contingencies of life, the absence of moral education, favor the budding of bad instincts, the human brute is let loose, and we witness those horrible crimes of which the determining cause seems to escape the moral mind.

These criminals ought to be shut up—put where they cannot do harm. Under emotional influence, the general public pronounces the death-sentence against them and protests loudly against the right of pity. Still more, cultivated men, savants, who have vague notions of determinism dare to encourage this

spirit of vengeance; I have seen the use of this summary means urged on the score of economy, evidently less expensive for the state than the penitentiary.

I reject this solution: (1) because we have no right to carry to this point our necessary but uncertain rôle of judges; (2) because capital punishment suppresses all possibility of revision if there should be an error of judgment; (3) because it does not fulfil its preventive aim, the criminal acting on the spur of the moment, even in crime long premeditated, in a state of mind in which passion is such that the question of incurring punishment rarely intervenes and in a very secondary manner; (4) because, whether performed in public or in the courtyard of a prison, this execution develops in the low natures that make up crowds the bloodthirsty instinct, the desire for cruel vengeance. The very idea of this cold-blooded murder wafts a breath of savagery over minds that is more demoralizing than the example of a crime. Who among us would like to play the part of executioner?

Officers of the law think they have recog-

nised a moralizing influence in the death-sentence, from the fact that certain prisoners condemned to death and pardoned have manifested their joy at finding their heads still on their shoulders. It would be truly exacting much of criminals to expect them to show a contempt of death; in the face of capital punishment, it is still reasonable to prefer prison. But the criminal does not give himself up to these reflections at the moment of committing the crime. Then he acts from impulse, and fears only one thing—to be discovered and punished. It is only later that he shows a preference for some modes of punishment.

In persons who are less defective and who seem to enjoy a normal physical and mental constitution, the circumstances of life take the part of determining causes and create the "casual criminal." These ought also to be put where they can do no harm. They are liable to suffer not only because society, like the individual, has the right to lawful defence, but because this penalty will show the guilty the offensive character of their acts and will strengthen the motives for right, which, insuf-

ficient at the time when the crime was perpetrated, may be able to exercise a more powerful influence over them.

We must, then, in no way consider the delinquent as not to blame—see in him an invalid, an idiot, and suggest the asylum instead of the prison for him. Crime must be prevented; it must be stopped in the path of its performance, and repetition of it be prevented. We must punish in order precisely to restore those moral barriers that have yielded too easily under the pressure of passionate impulses. That is a work of correction which society undertakes, and this duty is all the more sacred because society is itself the cause of the physical, intellectual, and moral destitution into which it allows so many individuals to degenerate.

The prisons will remain. They will not become pleasant places of rest for the "crazy," but in the midst of them, where the loss of liberty always constitutes the greatest punishment for the criminal, the moralizing influence of the director of the penitentiary, the chaplain, and the doctor ought to be abundantly exercised with full measure of that

alloy which the idea of determinism directly creates. Plato said, "The wise man punishes, not because some one has sinned, but that he shall sin no more." Every completed action is irrevocable; we only anticipate the future.

Yes, we say, doubtless there are fortuitous events in the life of a criminal, independent of him, which should not have been coincident; there was a fatal chain of circumstances. Doubtless the amorality of this man has its principal cause in the lack of moral culture. But there is an element of *liberty* which would have allowed the individual to oppose his will to those successive impulses.

I make the same reply as to *thought*. The unvarying fact, easily proved, is that our acts are determined by motives of feeling or by motives of intelligence. It is those who admit that something else exists in man who must prove that moral ideas springing from neither heredity nor education are hidden in the mind. This has never been demonstrated; we are content to assert that an idea, more or less clear, of good or bad, pre-exists in the human mind; a morsel of moral conscience,

but this morsel would be insufficient, independent of circumstances; it is upon the hypothetical existence of this primordial conscience that the vague idea of responsibility and the severity shown in regard to others are based.

IV

CONSCIENCE

IV

CONSCIENCE

What is conscience? It is a collection of moral conceptions which, at a given moment, exist in the understanding of man and serve him as a guide for the conduct of life.

We say of some one that he has no conscience, of another that he has a tender conscience. While it often becomes atrophied, it is also cultivated and refined by individual and collective education. It varies, like character, in different persons; it varies in different peoples according to their mentality. Commercial honesty is not the same everywhere; there are communities in many ways uneducated, among which it is scrupulously practised; others where, in spite of scientific, artistic, and literary development, the moral conscience seems to be atrophied; still others where commercial honesty is proverbial, but where there is a very elastic conscience in everything concerning sexual morality.

These individual and national conditions of

mind are often so stable that one might attribute them uniquely to heredity or consider them as indelible peculiarities of the race. Still we see minds change, amongst individuals, by judicious advice and under the influence of a current of new religious and moral ideas.

Verification of these facts leads us to consider moral conscience as a product of education, with this reservation, that we must admit the influence of native predisposition due to heredity and to atavism.

Now, we do not choose either our native mentality or our education, and we take as a joke the popular advice that one should be careful in the choice of one's parents.

Are there some primordial ideas among the innumerable mental representations which form the baggage of our conscience and which we evidently owe to education, an indestructible nucleus of good or bad intuition? Must we recognise a voice of conscience, a thirst for unison, a need of justice that a general and absolute law imposes upon all men capable of thinking—to use the terms employed by a Genevese journalist who lately

criticised the antireligious lucubrations of Viviana in the French Chamber of Deputies? I should be delighted to think so, for if we possess the jewel of virtue in the very depth of ourselves we shall commit only mild sins.

First of all, it would be necessary for every one to be able to think, and to think philosophically; now many people are quite incapable of this sort of work, and so are already deprived of ideas considered primordial and indispensable.

Let us observe that this conscience imposed upon those who are able to think, this Kantian categoric imperative, would in no way give us liberty. Philosophically speaking, it is the height of slavery to obey a law not chosen by ourselves, however fortunate may be the practical results of this passivity. Nothing better corroborates the idea of determinism than this moral constraint from which we cannot escape. But the question does not affect us, who from the start admit this slavery, which, in regard to motives, is necessary and good; it matters little to us that we obey an idea acquired in the course of our life, or an idea rooted in us from the begin-

ning of our existence; we receive everything when we procure nothing for ourselves.

What is theoretically interesting is to know whether such and such an idea is ours a priori, as a gift of Providence or of good mother Nature, or if all our ideas are the fruit of experience. A warrior-prince of feudal Germany—I have forgotten his name—said, "Man has only two masters—nature and experience." He might simply have said experience, for nature is the brutal fact, and experience is our way of looking at and interpreting it.

Following the example of Kant, who strove to demonstrate a priori the character of the ideas of time and of space, we seem to admit that there is an innate morality in the human mind, germs of ideas persisting in spite of even unfavorable influences.

I do not well see what could exist in the mind of an infant at its birth. It seems only to have, at its entrance into the world, instincts, senses, and material needs. It would indeed be daring to say that it already had ideas, and above all such complex ideas as the thirst for unison or the need of justice; in

any case, it could but have a need of organic unison, the need of feeling comfortable.

But from the first days of existence education begins, education by the experience of feeling, by sensations of comfort or discomfort due to physical influences, such as heat, cold, sensorial impressions, moderated or made too acute by the sensibility of the nervous system. From the first wail, these sensations have an influence over the growing mind, and we see that a succession of painful impressions might modify the character of the infant, create the unhappy disposition one so often finds among children that have suffered from sickness or ill treatment. This stain is sometimes indelible. How do we know that this education by the senses does not begin before birth, in the maternal womb, where the fœtus may already find conditions unfavorable to its well-being owing to painful impressions? Little by little, by personal experience, and later, when it is able to understand from the experience of others, the child arrives at new ideas; it comes out of its animal mentality to fashion its human soul, accessible to abstract conceptions, to the moral

idea. It acquires the idea of space by seeing objects before it, the room they take up; it evolves that of time by observing a succession of deeds, and learns to understand the world; it seeks, above all, everything pleasing to itself and avoids whatever is displeasing. Enjoying the kindness of others, of a mother, of a nurse, it arrives at the idea of kindness, which it justly appreciates, in a quite egotistical manner. The idea of justice comes later, always from the personal point of view, when the wrong done by injustice is resented.

Even in his too narrow conception of the "ethics of personal interest," Epicurus was able without trouble to evolve the notion of justice. "Natural right," said he, "is nothing but a profitable compact, of which the object is reciprocal, that we shall not injure one another, nor be injured ourselves. Each one, in protecting himself against others, protects others against himself." That is a kind of tacit "social contract." This idea is able to reach the simplest minds—a fact that Rousseau gave himself much trouble to demonstrate in scientific terms.

The child has no need of philosophical

analysis impossible at its age in order to prove this fact by unimpeachable reasoning. Logic creates repulsion against injustice by the single fact that one has experienced it, and understands the suffering it entails. No association of ideas is simpler than that of contrast; the idea of justice suggests that of injustice. As Rousseau said in "Emile," the first sentiment of justice does not arise from what we owe, but from what others owe us.

We thus create, without the help of psychology, moral conceptions that it would be difficult to explain by syllogisms. Some things are so simple that they lose by analysis—not because they are a priori ideas, but because they are the fruit of proximate proofs and because the law springs naturally from them. It is the same with some scientific ideas. Our mathematicians begin algebra with the proposition: Every quantity is equal to itself. The mind of the child is often dumbfounded by this learned affirmation; for it has already proved the fact; this seems so commonplace to it that it does not see the use of expressing it; besides, the prop-

osition is easier to admit than to prove. The ideas of justice, of unison, are just as simple; they spring from the desire for welfare, and one must be quite denuded of all spirit of generalization not to be able to understand that the happiness we wish for ourselves is equally desirable for everybody else. In life, we forget this responsibility because we are too occupied with ourselves, but it is easy for us to recognise the justifiableness of altruistic sentiments which engender the idea of justice.

In the same way, there is no voluntary thought escaping from what I have called determinism of thought; there is no act not determined by motives; there is no way of admitting inborn ideas, constituting an element of primordial moral conscience. Conscience is more or less developed in each of us; it would be, I have said, quite insufficient if it were only formed by this hypothetical foundation which we persist in claiming. Our conscience is made up of all the moral ideas that we owe to experience. Some develop very quickly and very early; they come directly from the life of the

senses. Others are more complicated and can only be seized by the slow development of the human mind, under the influence of more mature, more refined experience, transmitted by religious or philosophical educators of every sort. It is attraction which has pushed these last to profounder reflection and has led them to a clearer view of things; untiring seekers, they place the nuggets that they find by the way at our disposition.

This moral conscience is rounded out during life by a deposit of new ideas, and by the correction of old ones. Our ethical views become exact or change, and at a certain age we are often amazed at what we formerly were able to do with a tranquil mind. Our ego is transformed little by little in the course of our existence. The moral conceptions acquired from the first years of life, completed or modified by subsequent experience, constitute what I have called the directing cushions. It is against them that mental representations strike; they are precipitated upon us by the paths of the five senses or by the memory of anterior excitations. I have shown the character, necessarily contingent and inde-

pendent of us, of these primary shocks which determine the continued movement of our thought.

It has been said that the idea of determinism is forced upon our mind when we examine objectively the actions of man; but to this reasonable view is opposed the inner experience which, on the contrary, gives us the sensation of liberty. This illusion is inherent to a purely subjective analysis of ourselves. Man evidently feels free when he is able to follow, without hindrance from others or resulting from an acknowledged disease, the inclination of his wishes, whether he obeys through taste—I can scarcely call it will—the motives of sensation or whether he prefers to submit himself to the dictates of reason. He disregards the inner slavery resulting from the continual variations of our mental and physical well-being, and, above all, he does not consider the pressure of motives as constraint, because they belong to him and determine his wish. He defines precisely this obedience as liberty, and forgets that one does not think as one likes, but as one can.

I have said that thought is not spontane-

ous; it follows excitation, always fortuitous. Determinism of thought implies that of acts, for the latter are the necessary sequence of mental representations. Man accomplishes acts, or has at least the intention of fulfilling them. These intentions to act are what philosophers in their own language have called volitions. We have concluded from these that there is a force in us, a freedom, and we have made will, like memory, a faculty of the mind.

The comparison is not exact. Memory is a biological fact; it is the faculty of retaining an impression, a residuum of anterior excitation. The cerebral cell is able to seal up a picture like the photographic plate impressed by the light. Memory so thoroughly depends upon the very constitution of the brain that it is scarcely possible to develop it. Whoever has a bad memory in childhood will never have a good one; he may learn many things, even go ahead of those better gifted, but he will be obliged to devote more time and attention to study. Will itself is not a faculty. In the long arc which begins by a fortuitous mental representation and,

after a thousand hesitations, after quite a toil of deliberation ends in the act, will is only a mathematical point that indicates the passage to a final volition, to the resulting act. It is our final wish that we decorate with the name of will. Everybody catches the idea of determinism without trouble. It is not antagonistic to any metaphysical conviction, to any religious faith. It is a simple question of psychology, which does not in any way pretend to solve the problems of the beyond. Thus it is never opposed by syllogism, that would truly be waste of time. But we claim liberty as being considered a primordial condition of responsibility; we postulate it as being the basis of morality. Obliged to recognise determinism in the great number of circumstances in life, the upholders of free will come to qualify human liberty as relative. They continually contract the pedestal upon which the august statue of liberty rests; for some time it has seemed to perch upon the point of a needle.

Liberty is not possible in a finite being, called into existence without his wish, limited in the length of his days, unable to arrive at

perfection, always dependent upon his surroundings, upon the numerous influences which act upon his body and on his spirit and which one might call educatives.

Doubtless the adoption of such a rational idea as determinism carries with it modifications in the conception of responsibility. This is fortunate, because the word is used at random, without our seeing what this commonplace label conceals. We must make a distinction. All responsibility should have its sanction. What are the different kinds of responsibility we are able to conceive? The first, which is obvious, is penal responsibility, that imposed upon society as a measure of personal defence, whether it be just or not so long as penal codes are law we must submit to them. At first sight, it seems strange to punish the man who commits a bad deed, since by determinism one merely sees in this act the result of a succession of events, some outer, others inner ones; indeed, it seems as if there were nothing to do but to fold one's arms while deploring such cruel fatalities. One forgets that the punishment is a new motive for right, introduced into the mind of the

person to guide his mental life, and to prevent other minds from straying after him. I repeat, it is not a work of vengeance; it is an educative influence that society should uphold. These ideas have already penetrated everywhere, even where people refuse, by a false conception of things, to admit the determinist conception. We are indebted to these ideas for the support of liberated prisoners, for efforts made for the education of young delinquents, and laws for conditional liberation and pardon, which should crown this charitable thought. The practical difficulties of application should not discourage when the basic idea is well understood—determinism of thought and act.

In the theistic conception we may recognise a second responsibility, that which brings us into the presence of a sovereign judge. Thus being the sole judge, it is presumption on our part to attempt to divine his decrees and to make the guilty, still unjudged, suffer our contempt. There is finally a third quite personal responsibility, and its only sanction is the evil we do to ourselves. In seeing the immediate results of guilty acts, we may some-

times find that the delinquents enjoy them, or that their punishment is not sufficient. This consideration should disquiet atheists only, for believers as a last resort appeal to a high court of immutable justice. Besides I think that the enjoyment of the guilty is never enviable. Should we like to be in their place? Enough about these three responsibilities, sanctioned though they are; they are as good as the responsibility of which we hear so much without an explanation of what is meant by it.

V

EDUCATION

V

EDUCATION

Education is entirely founded upon the idea of determinism. In fact, its aim always is to make the individual accept ideas that will determine his future conduct. Badly directed, it strengthens the motives of the senses and renders the individual a slave to his passions. Ethically directed, it raises those moral barriers which, coming between the unhealthful idea and the act, prevent the accomplishment of evil. It develops conscience. It is still from the psychological point of view slavery, but a useful slavery, because it contributes to our own happiness and to that of others.

We feel the chain that holds us when those who guide us make us take a direction opposite to that of our inmost wish, and we complain of this violence done to our feelings. We think ourselves free as soon as we are led in the direction we wish to go. Guyau expresses this very well when he says, "A dog

held in leash by his master would consider himself perfectly free if the master wanted to go just where the dog wished and at the same pace." The young man who has not yet felt the attraction of virtue resists the counsels of a mentor; he is indignant at constraint and does not see that the advice given him is good for him even if it restricts his liberty. But when he gets moral clairvoyance, another desire—a good one—will waken in him; he will then pursue it, and although always held in leash by the idea that has taken possession of him, he will have the feeling that the chain is loosened; he will get the illusion of liberty, like the dog, which, guided by attraction, closely follows his master. If, in his enthusiasm, the dog goes ahead, he will think that he is pulling his master, and has become his conductor. At first slave of his passions, the individual becomes slave of the moral idea.

It is consideration of the ethical goal to be reached, for the good of the individual and of humanity, that establishes the distinction between the two forms of slavery: that of evil and that of good; we too often forget the lat-

ter in psychological analysis. That is the reason why, in ordinary speech, we declare him a slave who obeys his impulses of passion, of egoism, and why absolute obedience to moral principles is considered liberty. "Become a slave to philosophy, and you will enjoy real liberty," said Epicurus; and Schiller repeated, "The moral man is the only free man." And to think that the majority of men imagine themselves free!

It is not a question of our freedom, but of finding the straight path, like the traveller who seeks to climb the longed-for height. He will profit by his personal experience in looking for the road, he will ask his way from those who have gone before him, and when he has found it he will not say, "I should like to take it," but will take it. This was well put by an intelligent invalid who said, "Will passively falls into the rut dug for it by right."

Man does not willingly do evil. He rather goes astray, as Socrates so justly thought, and all education has for its aim showing him the right road. If he does not take it, it is because he is not yet sure of the correctness

of your directions; it may appear to him shorter, but not so pleasant; much becomes a matter of taste.

The determinist character of education is clearly shown when this education is applied to authority in all its forms; it would be absurd to speak of the liberty of the child that is brought up on beatings, of liberty of thought when an opinion is imposed upon a person. There are methods of moral orthopædia which are still often used in communities where free will is claimed and the antinomy between the two ideas, authority and liberty, is not apparently noticed.

Liberty does not become greater, psychologically speaking, when we yield to any suggestions whatever. It is enough to have been present at hypnotic or suggestive séances in order to know that ninety-seven per cent. of people are apt to come under these influences by reason of their credulity, to appreciate the extent of liberty of judgments in man. Persuasion by more logical arguments does not leave greater liberty to the individual. It imposes nothing, it is true, and even expressly says, "You are free, listen to me,

follow the arguments." But if the idea presented to a person is accepted by him, and this acceptation does not depend upon his will but upon his faculty of comprehension, it becomes imperious, tyrannical, and carries away the person by so much the greater force as he is the more convinced. If, on the contrary, he resists the dialectics of the master, it is because he does not thoroughly understand the idea submitted to him; there is no room for it in the pigeon-holes which are already full; he remains the slave of his previous opinion. We all know how painful it is to come across this resistance in others' minds when we wish to do them a service by making them share our views.

Education by means of persuasion is the only kind that the apparent liberty of the individual respects, the kind that submits motives to him and allows him to value them according to his intellectual powers.

Every method that resorts to authority is essentially bad, although it may have the advantage of producing a quick and useful result. The end never justifies the means. A real idea which may take us by the collar

and make us obey in the manner of a whip may be more agreeable. It is not because the constraint of authority comes from others that we detest it, for the ideas that govern us also come from others, from our parents, from our masters, like the spankings they have probably given us. What is bad in authority is that it does not develop our clairvoyance and our perspicacity.

What we need in life is not will, which so many people pride themselves on having while they are only voluntaries; that is to say, slaves of their impulses. Intelligence is what we want. Spinoza expressed this idea in these words, "Intelligence and will are one and the same thing." Whoever has grasped this formula understands the entire question of determinism; for intelligence is a gift either of God or of nature, as you will; mere wishing does not make one intelligent. That is why it is as absurd to reproach a person for moral ugliness as it would be to consider his physical infirmities a crime.

We give a too restricted meaning to the word "intelligence" when we speak of those who have shown certain intellectual aptitudes

as intelligent persons; it is necessary to specify in what branch of human understanding they have merited this distinction as commonplace as decorations.

The Latin word *intelligere* means "to understand." Now, every day one sees people who, though masters in the field of science, arts, and politics, do not understand and are from an ethical point of view idiots or weak-minded. Alas, they lack exactly the most necessary intelligence—that which makes men; they have only the kind, more brilliant in the eyes of the world, which makes savants, artists, statesmen, and often blacklegs of genius! The aim of the education that we give to others, or receive from them, should be, above all, to form that moral intelligence which enables us to distinguish good from evil and to lighten through life our pathway, which is surrounded by pitfalls. All other kinds of intelligence are inferior to this. For those who possess them other kinds of intelligence may procure personal advantages, enjoyed by others, and thus contribute to the establishment of that contingent and always precarious happiness which comes

from the benefits of civilization. One need scarcely be a wizard to prove that this is not real happiness. Brilliant but fragmentary minds often do so much moral harm that the gifts they bring do not pay for it.

We have schools enough of this kind, which give us general and special knowledge, and can turn us into excellent technicians in all branches of human activity; what we need is a school to make men. In writing these words, I see myself assailed, in thought, by a crowd of experts of existing religions, who cry, "But this school exists; it is the Church." I find myself a little embarrassed in the presence of good people who see salvation only in a religion of authority. I in no way refuse their help and do not doubt their excellent intentions. I am even convinced that actual practice of Christ's morality would have brought this sought-for happiness to the earth. This is what M. Jean Omer Joly de Fleury said in his thundering speech against the book "De l'Esprit," "What men would be happier than Christians if they only regulated their conduct in everything by the moral teaching of the Evangelist; what gen-

tleness of customs, what cordiality in the relations of society, what regulations, what honesty, what justice in all our actions!"

Ah, yes, it would be very fine, but I humbly confess that I am not surprised at the result obtained at the end of nineteen hundred years. I have a deep feeling that if Jesus Christ revisited this earth, He would cover His face at the sight of the Christianity that claims to be His; perhaps His grief would not be greatly increased by visiting those who were called in his time Gentiles. Respect for authority is passing. I observed to an excellent Jesuit father, "You have the name of being the cleverest of all religious orders; you even tell me you do not fear law for your congregations, because this little business was settled in advance." "It is true," he replied, with a satisfied expression, not dissimulated, "we have this reputation for *savoir faire.*" "Well, do you know, I find you very clumsy." "How so"? "Because your part should be to keep your flock intact, together, and although you take all the care of sheep-dogs, I see your sheep escape you and scatter afar." "It is true," he replied with a

slightly bitter smile, "people do not love us, and in my own family, although very devout, I had to beg forgiveness for joining the order."

The good village priest has certainly a better influence over his sheep. I find many, nevertheless, who complain of preaching in the wilderness; there are still too many who have recourse to authority, threatening eternal punishment, without adding the wit of the curé of Cucugnan.

This impotency of the Church over certain souls has been clearly recognised by a nun, a sister of the Sacred Heart, who said: "A great number of persons whom we bring up with the religious idea turn away from us in the course of life, under the influence of social contagion, and with dogmas, they abandon the morality attached to them. If then we want to influence these souls, we must institute a path of rational morality." Indeed, it is to those who cannot accept religious dogmas that rational moral education will most appeal, founded upon the experience of all and transmitted to all. This does not mean that Christians can do without it. Even

while accepting a moral code divinely given, and revealed, and upon which their faith is founded, in order to apply it they must understand the utility of its precepts, either for their relative happiness on this earth or to achieve eternal bliss. Thus they also are obliged to understand; they must have ethical intelligence.

This necessity for the control of reason is what Channing, and with him the American Unitarians generally, clearly saw. While remaining a Christian, he admits that revelation and reason, both given to man for his guidance, are necessarily in agreement and can never be in opposition. Following his comparison, both are seen to be the same light differing as dawn and midday; one is the perfection and not the opposite of the other, completing and not overthrowing it. He accepts dogmas on condition that they receive the assent of reason.

Even for those unable to reach the point of this Christian rationalism, it remains evident that morality may be founded upon reason, and that a perfect harmony may be established, from the point of view of the conduct

of life, between those who believe in religion and those who seek support in philosophy. As a sign of the times, a society of freethinkers and free believers has been recently founded.

I say that for the flight into life we must start from a platform able to support our spring. Christians suspend it from the heavens by chains of dogmatism; I do not deny that this can be used by those rare persons sufficiently gifted morally to truly live the Christian life. Those who do not believe construct this platform upon a broad base, upon firm layers of reason. I have no right to admit, a priori, that this edifice is the weaker. Besides, there have been enough virtuous rationalists to have justified the daring expression of "lay saints." It is then entirely by the influence of persuasion, and by showing the path of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, that we can influence others; and they should have recourse to the same means to educate us. Unfortunately, the result of this desired education is not always what we expect—indeed, it stumbles against many obstacles.

Like seed sown in badly prepared ground, the moral idea is also abortive in minds warped by heredity and atavism. In a greater degree, fortuitous educative influences act surreptitiously, as unforeseen meteorological conditions act upon a plant and disconcert the sower. The word "education" is used in a much too restricted sense when, always with the idea of liberty, one makes the objection, "Look at this; here are two young persons, both gifted, who have received at home, at school, and from the Church the same education, and yet one is a delightful fellow and the other a good-for-nothing." The latter is blamed, as if he voluntarily shut the ears of his understanding to the excellent counsels given to him.

We commit the same mistake as the gardener who would say, "Here are two plants that I sowed in the same bed, that I have cultivated with the same care; one is well developed and the other is a disobedient weed." Between two brothers, apparently so dissimilar, there may be less moral difference than we imagine, and some fortuitous circumstance might have been enough to invert the rôles.

By the side of directed and desired education there are many secret influences which are acting from the first day of life and which may lead the individual into a wrong path. We feel these influences every day, however absorbed we are in our surroundings, exposed to the contagion of all these germs of vice which breed in the moral air that we breathe, and we become inoculated by speech, by reading, and above all by example. It is the same with education as with the precautions we take to prevent our children catching contagious diseases such as scarlatina or measles. Sometimes we think we have succeeded—until the day when one of them comes home with measles, while his brother, sitting by his side at school, escapes.

Doubtless the intentional education we receive does a great deal for our subsequent development, but we must not forget the material and moral influences working unknown to us. I have said that they may, from fœtal life, influence the character of the child, and lead it into the path of sadness or of sullenness. At the moment of writing these words I have received from a French practitioner

the following communication: "Two children that I know were born eleven or twelve months apart. At the birth of the first, an excellent wet-nurse was chosen, the child flourished, was raised without trouble, and the parents wondered at this big, fresh, rosy boy, always laughing, and who was never heard to cry. The second arrived; the nurse had been so good that the parents decided they could not do better than confide the second child to her; but the exhausted breasts were not sufficient; the child made vain efforts and, often famished, cried with all his might, diarrhœa resulted, and the cries of the child were still shriller. 'You see,' said the parents, 'what a bad disposition this one has! He is brought up like his brother, he has the same nurse, and as the first was well behaved and gave us no trouble the second is just the opposite, fretful and sulky'; the conclusion being, what a wretched disposition!"

Do not let it be thought that this is a rare case, in which the parents were not intelligent; it is a typical example of that which goes on in different ways in families, in crèches, in the best-organized charity institutions.

Doubtless if a child has a case of well-defined sickness, kind persons will be found to take care of it, but if it be sulky without the cause being discovered, let it beware. Children who cry are not loved, nor are those who look sad or refuse to be petted. Affection is naturally given to those who are chubby and, above all, smiling. It is hard for a mother to avoid preferences, even at the very time when a keener sympathy should particularly surround the one more poorly endowed. These preferences aggravate the state of mind of the little sufferers. Soon they wake to feelings of jealousy, and moral deformation increases. We are unjust towards those we should protect because we forget that they are what they are able to be. We flatter ourselves on being charitable towards them when we have only thought egotistically of the annoyance they cause us. How much harder are we upon adults who no longer exercise upon us the charm of childhood!

In other ways, there are contagions working surreptitiously. A word spoken before a child at a time of psychological receptivity may destroy all our moral orthopædia. Let

us always bear in mind these many and powerful causes of deformation, and never throw a stone at him who has strayed from the right way. A delicate tact is needed in this reciprocal education; its base is in the plenary indulgence that the determinist idea admits of and in the constant worship of the moral ideal. The education we receive from others is the first degree, the kindergarten. During the years when the intelligence is insufficiently developed, logical persuasion must not be rigorous, but a grain of authority will of necessity be mixed with teaching. We must add the least possible amount of authority; it becomes efficient only when later it is completed by advice that shows the pupil where to find the good. As soon as he feels its attraction he will look for it alone. At the advent of the age of reason the most efficacious education begins, the education of self.

But here let us understand each other. In the same way that there is no free thought, so there cannot be a really free education of self. It is impossible for us to will to think, to invent ourselves a new idea. We can develop only what has been acquired and en-

large the ideas with which we have been imbued. Education by others is the master's lesson; education of self is the personal work in the individual; it works by the data of previous teaching. It is only a repetition, and if occasionally we add something not in the lesson, we use ideas taken from others or drawn from the master of us all, experience. The pupil does not voluntarily perform this work of development by the decision of a sovereign will; he can only give himself up to this increasingly serious study by reason of its attraction for him—attraction not given to him, but one he submits to from the very fact of previous cultivation. To study the piano with enthusiasm, to practise out of lessons, one must have felt attraction for it, and be fond of the work; thus can one calculate the advantages derived from it. Then and only then is our attention fixed upon the advice of our teacher, and we take pleasure in following it. But how many are never able to recognise the attraction and abandon the study! It is the same with moral culture. We are given the basis, as in music. But where are the zealous pupils who continue their edu-

cation? Alas, the deserters are numerous! It is because they have not tasted its attraction. They are like the youngster who would rather play in the woods and who yawns when put at the piano, which he hates. Isn't this often due to the fact that the teacher has disgusted the pupil?

The education of self is then not voluntary or spontaneous. We give ourselves up to it only when we have discovered the attraction attached to this work of inner perfecting. It only differs from education received from others in the fact that we teach the lesson to ourselves. Attracted by its charm, our attention becomes fixed; thought received from others becomes clear, and is developed. Our fortune is increased by accumulated interest, like capital in a savings-bank, yet there are people who prefer to keep their money in a stocking.

It is still another illusion to consider the education of self as the result of a wish. Such education is passive in the sense that it is created from a received impulse, which we follow only when it gives us pleasure. When an idea means nothing to it, it loses its

character as a force-idea and the movement stops.

Moral ideas are so naturally the result of experience that they have been in existence ever since the beginning of human thought; that is why we add nothing absolutely new to the ethical capital we have inherited from past centuries. Obedient to modern association of ideas, we express the same old thoughts under different names; we choose pictures from real life that ought to illustrate the idea, but on close inspection it proves to be just the same old doll dressed in new furbelows. New ideas, with a particular nomenclature, spring up only when there is a fact that was unknown to our predecessors. This is what happens in the field of science, or when experience, most often fortuitous, opens new horizons to us. Thus the discoveries in electricity, the Roentgen rays, and radium have created new words, labelling new conceptions; only a few years are needed to make a treatise on natural philosophy old-fashioned. Moral ideas, on the contrary, remain the same throughout civilization. If we eliminate from ancient writings a few allu-

sions that gave them local color, we shall find the ideas of Socrates, Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius absolutely modern and applicable to our times. In this field of ethical thought, men remain the same. The everlasting struggle between the priests of dogma and the rationalists was long ago summed up in this speech of the Stoic slave, "Why don't we do from reason what the Galileans do from habit?" He added a criticism that would be as pertinent to-day as it was in the first century of the Christian era when he accused the Christians of not leading a life in conformity with their doctrines. I believe that Epictetus, travelling now over our civilized world, would retract nothing from that just remark.

It is precisely because man does not think as he wishes, but as he can, that education should try to enlighten him, to show him the road to that inner happiness which lives in the satisfaction of an enlightened conscience.

Whoever has been touched in his moral feelings by the lessons of his childhood will feel the powerful attraction of such a state of soul; his association of ideas will fall natu-

rally into the circle, his thought will be fixed, beset upon this task of ethical perfecting. He will live with enthusiasm for what is good, whether he depends upon a religious belief that satisfies his aspirations towards another world or whether he tries to find his road by the light of reason. Rationalists have always been accused of pride. The reproach would be justified if they pretended to have found or invented the only truth for themselves. Their rôle is more modest; they have only gathered the heritage of previous generations and have taken from it what they could understand and love. We cannot ask of a man more than the consideration of ideas submitted to him; he has the right to examine them by the light of reason, even if it be defective, for it is the only lantern that he has in his search for truth.

VI

MORAL CLEAR-SIGHTEDNESS

VI

MORAL CLEAR-SIGHTEDNESS

The sole liberty that man enjoys is the power to react under the influence of an idea, the ability to obey either the motives of feeling—that is to say, of his passions—or the motives of reason. This obedience is willing, and that is why we call it free, but this willingness depends upon our innate and acquired mentality. To struggle against the temptation of the passions, we require not liberty but a uniformity of moral views that would make the mental balance lean to the right side. It would be necessary for the little head that we suppose at the end of the indicator to have a clear view, a distinct vision of what is good and of what is bad.

Education alone, in its broadest sense, is able to give us this moral clear-sightedness which in the determinist conception replaces the idea of will. We must see the road before taking it. This education of moral conscience is made either by our own experience

of feeling and morals or by that of others. It begins by being receptive to the teachings of our educators, until our culture is sufficient to permit us the labor called personal. This continued culture leads us not to liberty but to the control of ourselves; that is to say, to a beneficent slavery in face of moral feelings imposed upon the spirit. One may here speak of the categorical imperative, not native and reduced to an imperceptible core of conscience, but acquired and firmly based upon our understanding. Of this noble idea of moral determinism the wise Guyau was able to say, "Who does not act according to his thought acts imperfectly."

In analyzing the determinism of thought, I have remarked that every mental representation of an act produces the immediate accomplishment of that act if it be not prevented by a contrary mental representation. This is a fact capable of verification, but requiring its expression to be perfected. That the idea may culminate in action, the mental representation must kindle a desire. The pure and intellectual idea has no motive power; it acquires this only by the addition of

an emotional and passionate element. Then only does it become a force-idea, following the correct description given by Fouillée—according to common speech, sentiment, and passion. This is what so many great minds have not seen, accustomed as we are to admit a fundamental difference between reason and feeling, to disregard the tie that binds them. Hear what Pascal says, that mystical and neurasthenic genius who wrote so well, and who so often thought imperfectly:

> Man's conversion is prevented by his idleness, his passions, his pride—in a word, by his self-love. We cannot expect to conquer this sentiment with an idea; a passion only yields to a passion.

Truly, a passion only yields to a passion, a sentiment only yields to a sentiment; we could not put it better. But why did not Pascal see that all our passions, with the exception of the purely animal ones (hunger, thirst, sexual desires, need of physical comfort), are ideas become sentiments from being forced upon our understanding? The passion that Pascal wished to oppose to human passions, to ever-recurring egotism, was religious passion; that is to say, an idea

that had become hot from having been hammered into his head.

It is true that man does not act directly under the influence of ideas; he is ripened by sentiments. The act must have an attraction for him, and if it is a question of a complex idea, of a moral conception, he must become enthusiastic before he can become its apostle. Sometimes the ethical idea presents itself to us as does classical feminine beauty; we remain cold towards the body of a goddess, towards the elegant poise, towards the Grecian nose; she does not awaken love in us. But let us know her thoroughly, and we shall recognise the qualities of grace, of mind and of heart. Beware, lest she strikes like the lightning, for she is more dangerous, and we may become her slaves. Thus it is that an idea takes possession of us, and holds us in its claws. In an article upon Brunetière, a writer has shown the illustrious critic during his march towards Christianity as "guided by his logic as a prisoner by his chain." The expression is correct; it demonstrates the slavery we are in concerning our own thought, and our personal logic, which is not always that of

others. That of Brunetière, through authority and tradition, brought him to Rome; that of many others keeps them away just as imperiously. I used above, by force of habit, the expression "qualities of heart." Here we are again before an empty pod; one of those labels that do not correspond with the contents. From the beginning of psychic life, man noticed that certain thoughts produced a particular emotion, the strange sensation of a full heart, of precordial suffering. He saw this inhaling and forcing pump intended to keep up the circulation associate itself with our joys as with our griefs, and in his unthinking language he immediately relegated feeling to the heart and ideas to the head. The fancy is poetic and as such merits preservation, but we must not take comparison for reason. Sentiments are not born in our heart, which has quite other functions; they are awakened in our minds, under the cold form of mental representation or picture.

Isolated, this idea could not produce the emotional storm, but immediately associations of ideas surge up, reawakening ideas already stored in our memory, and physical

preparations are set going, revealing psychic emotion. An isolated string of an instrument can vibrate alone and produce a little sound; vibrating between other strings, properly stretched, it transmits its movement and we get harmony, which gives us more than its single sound. It is the same with the life of the mind. Innumerable ideas may follow one another through our head; they are isolated strings, vibrating in succession; they produce no emotional movement. This is what generally happens in scientific work, in spite of the abundance of ideas busy in our mind. We remain cold in spite of intense intellectual work. We read a letter, and nothing among this succession of ideas at first disturbs us. Suddenly we think we detect a reproach in an expression intended to be good-natured; we blush and our hearts beat faster. This is because the idea that sprang up awakened new ones; the shaking of a string transmitted itself to others, and the sound gained in volume.

It is by this awakening of previous mental representations, already become sentiments because they are habitual, and touching our

pride, that the phenomenon of emotion is produced. It begins by an idea, to which others link themselves; it ends in physiological disturbances—pallor, blushing, tears, heart-beatings, catching of breath, stomach trouble, insomnia, etc.

There is the same difference between the cold intellectual idea and warm feeling as between the simple tangible sensation and the sensation of grief, which is also accompanied by analogous physiological phenomena. Excitement of the peripheric nerves becomes painful when it passes a certain limit, and this physical feeling varies in different individuals. If there are intense pains which induce in all people analogous reactions, there are others confined to certain persons. It is the same with emotion; an event to which our neighbour is indifferent throws us into the height of agitation, and we recognise it to be untimely and disproportionate to the cause which produces it. It is because we not only obey the actual mental representations, the momentary logical arguments, but obey before everything else the yoke of our previous feelings, the ideas ranged at the bottom of

our personality. They also have been intellectual in their time, and they have become sentiments because they satisfied our most secret aspiration. There is not between sentiment and reason that antinomy which poets, moralists, even psychologists, and, above all, those impressionable beings called "nervous," are pleased to point out. The heart has no "reasons that reason does not understand." What is true is that man does not think perfectly; he allows emotional storms to burst forth when juster and prompter reflection would have prevented it. It is by this clear view of things that we check growing emotion, as we stop the vibration of a glass by touching it with our fingers. It would still be better not to allow it to start.

Many of my patients whose chief trouble is emotional come to me saying, "My feelings form a group apart, and my reason exists beside them; between these two compartments there are air-tight partitions which do not allow my reason to introduce order into my feelings." I answer them, "You deceive yourselves; there are no primary feelings; they are all bound to a mental representation

of intellectual order, accessible to the criticism of reason. So also is there a logic of feelings. They should only penetrate our soul and remain there when they have received the permission of our reason. Your tendency to separate these two fields equals the saying, so commonplace and so foolish, 'It is stronger than I.' This is not the spirit that leads to victory."

To our passions we can only oppose ideas, but they must be sufficiently clear for us to seize and carry them off; they then will become feelings, passions, and we will act automatically under their imperious injunction.

These directing ideas which should serve us as guide are not voluntarily chosen in what has been called "willing indifference"; our choice is determined by our sympathies; let us call it our moral taste. In the presence of the train of ideas continually filing past our eyes, we are like a prince that has to marry and to whom a number of young girls are presented. He is graciously told, "You are free; now choose." It is forgotten that only a certain number of the same social rank have been presented to him and that his

choice is forcibly restricted. Whom will he choose? Why, she who best pleases him. Will he let himself be led by a pretty face, or by the money-bags of an ugly one? Will he act under the moral constraint of his father, who gives him liberty in words only? Well, that depends upon his mind, and prince though he be, he has neither escaped the effects of heredity nor the suggestions of his education.

There are people who are really lucky in this world. They are born among moral surroundings, have been brought up kindly, gently, by the affection of their parents, by teaching and by example; more important still, they have learned to understand these moral ideas and have grasped the advantages of beauty. Their education has been carried on with that ability which makes for sincerity, without forcing a choice upon them. Exterior constraints have disappeared, and the individual yields only to his personal sympathies; he feels himself free. Is it to be wondered at if he becomes wedded to these pet ideas, if he be guided through life by them? Other people have had the same advantages

and have chosen badly; and like a dissipated elder son upon whom honourable marriage is urged and who prefers loose women, they disdain virtue. Perhaps they have been treated with greater severity; perhaps they are incorrigible, abnormal, incapable of appreciating real charm. Finally, others are not brought up with this care, but like those young men who, without knowing many women, still find charming wives, they become enamoured of virtue without being pushed towards it. Thus, one may go astray in spite of all the favourable educative influences which seem to act upon him, while another finds the right path alone.

Education should compel nothing, for constraint produces opposition; it may suggest, present ideas, demonstrate the advantages of them, and create a liking for them without urging them with displeasing insistence.

In the education of ourselves, we are like the marrying man who, arriving home, thinks over the girls that have been suggested to him, finding in one new charms, in another more serious qualities. We also are smitten with ideas submitted to our judgment. Alas, we

are often unfaithful to them, but the choice made, this love must increase and the bond become unbreakable!

Education of ourselves when it succeeds unites us to an ideal of good. We may borrow these governing ideas from a set of doctrines, obey a religion that we admit to be revealed, those moral laws which Le Play called an "eternal decalogue." There are also many people who require authority, who like to bend before it, as well as to use it over others. Needless to say, I am not one of them.

We may also construct this ideal by thought, by an increasing attachment to conceptions which to us seem good, useful for us, for others, and for humanity. The ideal is the idea carried to infinity; we move towards the establishment of this conception like the mathematician who draws a finite line on the board and asks us to consider it infinite, by supposing that it continues forever.

There is nobody in the world, however disinherited he may be, who has not experienced the benefit of kindness from a mother, a friend, or some person or other—perhaps

only that of a faithful dog. From that minute he has the conception of that virtue. It is easy for him to imagine somebody better than his benefactor, and beyond that other, still a better one. This "always better" leads us straight to infinity, to the ideal of kindness. In the same way, we conceive the ideal of other virtues, whose beauty we recognise, and it is this gathered knowledge that will make the beacon of our ideal.

Alas, we often allow this beacon to go out, which we should so carefully preserve, and render brighter by adding the ideal of another virtue! There are virtues whose beauty we do not immediately recognise; thus humility is very little appreciated and chastity is ridiculed. It needs a certain maturity of mind to arrive at patience and indulgence; these are not the virtues of youth. The greatest fault of man is to lower his ideal, while it can never be placed too high. It is not a goal within our reach; it is a star in the firmament that guides our feet. Doubtless we often go astray, we forget to look at the star that should guide us, but it is always there, and so we should look up! Do not become

discouraged, and, to make the task easier, do not take an object nearer us as guide, a will-o'the-wisp which is disappearing, the light of a house about to be put out, a traveller who does not know the way.

We cannot make terms with virtue, nor arrangements with the heavens. This ideal seems lacking in the present generation. Faith disappears, stifled under a mass of superstitions; it inflames only a few isolated souls in whom education has developed tradition; it is associated with the dogmas of others, with faithful attachment to superannuated political forms, to an unchanging social order; it is the ideal of natures deeply conservative, lost in this troubled age where everything is given up to motive, where doubt corrodes all our ideas. The result is an indescribable uneasiness from this transitory state of mind, and for our happiness we must return to a faith; that is to say, to an enthusiasm. A few thinkers retain a valiant religious optimism and hope that after many strayings the docile sheep will come under the crook. Their watch seems to me to be slow, like Brunetière, that great but wrong-

headed man of letters. We must not forget the thousands of souls that reform has separated from Rome, those prosperous nations that have found in the education of themselves, in a religion of mind, their strongest support. We must have no illusion about the religious feeling of the masses ostensibly remaining faithful; the authority of the Church has only trained them to an apparent obedience. It has developed in them, not religious needs, but cultivated habits, without moral influence. It is easier to subscribe to these rites, to go to mass or to a sermon, to eat fish, or to fast than to change one's heart and become better to-day than one was yesterday.

What man needs is faith in an ideal of moral beauty, an attachment increasingly greater to ethical views, contributing to give him happiness upon this earth; not that happiness dependent upon circumstances, but inner happiness entirely resulting from a complete unison between conduct and the ideal aspiration.

We speak disdainfully of this utilitarian morality that consists of the search for hap-

piness. Now, those who rail would be unable to name an act of their lives that was not performed under the influence of this ineradicable desire. A moral that was not utilitarian would run a great risk of being a moral without utility and without force. Criticism of this independent morality would be just if personal interest were its guide. One must be blind to found morality upon egoism, but that is a word the sense of which we must agree upon before we wrangle about it.

VII

EGOISM AND ALTRUISM

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EGOISM AND ALTRUISM

There is a form of egoism that cannot be recommended too highly; it is altruism. When this word, a little barbaric, came to take the place of "charity," a Protestant pastor, with scant charity for those who did not think as he did, sought to overwhelm rationalism by saying, "Altruism is only egoism perfected." He did not know how truly he spoke nor how well that definition applied even to "charity." The fact is, we cannot get away from ourselves, and in the end everything comes back to our ego. There is a prepossession of one's self, a veritable delight, even in sacrifice; thus one has never seen religious painters give the commonplace expression of suffering to their martyrs—they illuminated them with joy, their eyes being raised to heaven.

The saying "It is better to give than to receive" shows how thoroughly the popular

mind seized this idea of pleasure in the accomplishment of good. "It feels fine to be honest," Hector Malot makes one of his street Arabs say. It does indeed, and that is why there are so many good people in every social class; and above all, down in the masses, who suffer and who love.

It was not entirely a joke that illustrated this thought by attributing to a miser the saying, "Charity is a pleasure one must do without." Not at all; we must not go without it; we must enjoy it and drink to the dregs this cup without lees.

In opposing egoism to altruism a strange confusion has been brought about. La Rochefoucauld justly flayed the egoism of men, but he exaggerated by sharply looking for it in quite disinterested acts. It is indeed easy to recognise everywhere this supreme self-possession, but it is a mistake to see in it a wrong sort of pride. Egoism, in its incriminating, culpable meaning, consists of thinking of one's self only. Altruism makes us think of others, of all humanity, ourselves included; we cannot seek after the good of every one without creating our own happi-

ness. It may be mixed with troubles, but it will be the happiness of our innermost ego.

There are in every-day life a number of occasions when we can abandon ourselves without scruple to the most complete egoism. This happens when an act concerns one's self only and has no bearing on the welfare of others. But in this field of allowable egoism we may be asked to give up a pleasure because it hinders the liberty of our fellow men.

In the family we owe duties to others, and the circle of our preoccupations widens; it stretches to a certain number of loved beings. There is altruism in this feeling, but marital or family egoism is what dominates; it is little better than personal egoism, because the circle is still too small. By perfecting our own thought, we reach the stage of thinking about distant relations, our friends, our social class, the town in which we live, our country. By concentric circles the altruistic thought extends further and further and creates the spirit of responsibility towards humanity entire. The idea remains concrete in spite of its extension; it applies to the actual world that we know; finally, it is raised

to abstraction and culminates in the idea of good and evil.

Good in being done by everybody contributes to the happiness of all; evil, if done by every one, would destroy this happiness. This explanation seems to me to preserve its value, whatever be the individual conception of good, whether sought for in this world or in the next. In self-examination nothing is harder than to recognise the nature of the feelings that make us act—to know if we obey our egoistic thought or if we enter the path of that constant altruism so necessary to our happiness. Our reflections, natural and legitimate as they may be, are not always as noble as they seem to be. Love as sung by the poets is very far from being a moral ideal; a German poet was able to say with reason that "Love is the poetry of egoism." Far be it from me to traduce that passion, but do not let us be deceived about animal origins, or the feline character of caresses; do not let us make too much a virtue of them. This is so small a virtue that, when it becomes unhealthy it may lead directly to crime, to the murder of the being loved.

Maternal love is the purest; this is shown by sacrifice, by complete forgetfulness of self. It does not in any way lessen its value to call it instinctive or automatic, or to say that its derivation is common to beasts and men. It is seen to survive among persons otherwise denuded of every altruistic feeling. This feeling, so touching, is not enough, however, to secure reform in the human species; filial love, which is its converse, has continued without creating a spirit of responsibility which alone can diffuse happiness.

It is curious to notice how many persons deceive themselves about the nature of their feelings towards others, quite unmindful of the egoism at the bottom. As an instance, a young girl who during convalescence was isolated and whose mother, worn out with long months of nursing, hoped to enjoy a rest, begged me to take her back to her mother immediately. When I asked the girl why she wanted her mother, she answered, "Oh, because I love her so much!"—a fine way indeed to show her love for her mother by disturbing her much-needed rest. The patient might have said, "I haven't the courage to do

without my mother." I would have forgiven this feeling without approving it. She was astonished that I would not recognise the altruistic character of her prepossessions. There are people who make a virtue of the tears they shed, their laments, upon the death of a person loved; they make a show of their mourning. While I do not expect them to have dry eyes, they should recognise that this grief has a purely egoistic origin. We do not pity the dead, who can no longer suffer; we pity ourselves and our separation from them. It is as natural as to cry out when we are hurt, but we should not make a virtue of this feeling, in which there is neither courageous stoicism, altruism, nor goodness.

It is often the same with pity. To be healthy, pity should be useful, should broaden us, and suggest promptly the means to succour those who are in trouble. Pity which softens us, plunges us into useless emotion, and prevents us from acting, is weakness. It is that lamentable pusillanimity which is so often seen in nervous people who cannot read of an accident without shaking with puerile fears. Some pride themselves upon this sus-

ceptibility, as if it were an expression of love for others. A man who was afflicted with diverse phobias, such as fear of microbes, of certain other things, and of death, who always had his eyes fixed upon his own dear body, said to me: "I suffered greatly when I heard of the catastrophe in Martinique. I am so susceptible to the misfortune of others that I ought to give up reading this sort of news." "And," said I, "you think you are expressing an altruistic sentiment by it!" "Certainly, what else could it be?" "Pardon me, but it was nothing but intense fear. You have a constant dread of death, are alarmed at the smallest indispositions. The tale of this misfortune merely awakened your terror by reminding you of the frailty of human existence; above all, of your own. I will bet that you haven't given a cent to the victims of this cataclysm?" "That's a fact," he replied smiling; "I never thought of it."

Submit our pity to the criticism of reason and we shall easily recognise an ever-lively egoism in the midst of apparently altruistic grief. This does not mean that we can always resist these feelings, that they are in them-

selves culpable. We have the right to weep over those we lose, to suffer with others; we cannot always prevent fear taking hold of us; but we should admit also that there is nothing edifying in emotions, and that, the first moment of surprise past, we should busy ourselves in the single aim of soothing those who suffer, instead of giving them the spectacle of our affection.

What would we say of a doctor, or of a sister of St. Vincent de Paul, who while the wounded were coming in began to weep in the ambulance instead of doing his or her duty? Life to us is a field of battle; we are surrounded by the suffering; we gather in the wounded by thousands. Let us dry useless tears and bind up the wounds with a comforting smile for the sufferers. This is not a task reserved for doctors alone; everyone should take part in this charitable work; it is reciprocal, and we all have need of it.

The same confusion reigns in our mind in our conception of duty. We often fulfil it in a spirit of sullenness, like a child reluctantly studying its lessons.

When the essence of supreme duty is un-

derstood, duty is performed with joy; it creates pleasure in our soul, and it is exactly this that induces us to accomplish it in spite of the sacrifices it may entail upon ourselves. A lady, gifted with a fine intelligence and a beautiful mind, said to me one day: "I have a friend whose greatest wish has always been to take the veil. Her father being dead and her mother having to bring up a large family alone, she bravely gave up her vocation to help her mother in her task." "What you tell me is very fine; there is a young girl who has chosen the right road!" "Well, she suffers cruelly from the sacrifice she made." "Then I don't understand it at all. If you had told me she suffered anguish the day she made her resolutions, if you had told me of moral struggles in making up her mind, I could easily grasp her condition of mind. But, once the sacrifice was made, there was no room for suffering; your friend had an erroneous idea of duty; she has not understood its gentle delight."

The lady did not yet seem to be convinced of the soundness of my criticism. She understood me when I took a simple and more

demonstrable example. "You are to go to a ball to-night and you have been looking forward to it for a long time. While you are dressing, your mother is taken seriously ill. Then you are obliged to stay with her, to take care of her. It is doubtless unfortunate, and no one expected you not to be for the moment sorry. But you will admit that it was also very natural that you should think of your mother with tender feelings, with sympathy. Knowing you as I do, I should be very much surprised if that did not stifle the other feeling. Upon this condition alone could your mother accept the sacrifice and give herself up to your care. If she saw that you still suffered, that your thoughts were at the ball, that you looked longingly at your finery, she would herself suffer, and might say to you, 'Go to the ball, I will get along with a trained nurse.' Would you feel happy then dancing with your partner?"

Duty, however painful it may be, however hard the first renouncement, should be accomplished joyfully—from the time one's consent is given, all suffering disappears. As with a child, we replace by a greater and more last-

ing pleasure one he has had to forego. Doubtless in the course of a life consecrated to duty, hesitations may arise and reawaken the pain of renouncement when decision is made again. When we have succeeded in making our choice, tranquillity should again result.

The idea of duty is not complete, not understood so long as the least idea of drudgery is mixed with it. We cannot benefit by a sacrifice made for us while we feel that it is not made willingly. It is really curious that the conception of joy in duty has been so little propagated. The majority of people only accomplish duty with visible effort, and so ungraciously that the object of the sacrifice would rather have done without the queer exhibition of sympathy. We recognise here the short-sighted vision of man, who does not know how to prolong his thought, to push it to the very limit of the ideal. He stops to consider his own person, sometimes stretches his affections to those nearest him; he does not know how to raise himself by a rational thought that will engender right feeling, making a passion of altruism that embraces in a

common love everything created. Like a child that only grasps simple examples, we practise altruism easily enough when the resultant advantage is before our eyes. Thus, in a restricted society, pursuing a cooperative aim, we know how to renounce personal advantage, bring in our share, and think of the good of the society, for we clearly see that we shall be called upon to reap the common benefits. Would it not be possible to generalize this view, to apply it to moral well-being as to material advantages, to draw continually greater circles around us, forgetting, so to speak, that we are at the centre of them?

Religion and philosophy mutually reproach each other with putting personal egoistic reasons at the base of their efforts towards good. Stoicism is, like epicurism, an egoistic manifestation. With a valour clothed in pride, suffering is suppressed by disdaining it; it is a useful way for the strong to make themselves easy in mind.

On the other hand, we reply to Christians: Your prepossessions are equally egoistic. First, you in no way disdain this world's happiness. and in your pride of possessing the

only truth you practise your religion in its easiest forms, so as to secure a comfortable place in heaven and avoid eternal punishment. There is injustice in these judgments, for we must discriminate. There may be vulgar egoism in both conceptions; both may also be raised to the noblest altruism.

The egoist, whether Christian or philosopher, thinks of himself only, whether he seeks after worldly material or moral advantages, or whether he expects them in another world; the motive power is personal interest, and if it be moral, it is still earthly, for it is common both to man and to the animal that also obeys the attraction of recompense and the fear of punishment.

Persistent craving for happiness becomes altruistic only when man recognises the realization of his aspirations in an ardent love for others, when he draws the circle around humanity entire. He cannot be outside this circle; he is of necessity part of it, and there is no egoism in this assertion. Agnostic philosophy draws this circle of love around humanity; it unites there its abstract ideal of infinite goodness; it forgets itself in this

altruistic preoccupation, knowing all the time by its reason that it will never fail to be benefited by it.

The real Christian thinks likewise, but this is by clothing his fine ideal in a personal God, whom he loves with all his might.

Without this constant spirit of responsibility, religion as well as philosophy would remain plainly egoistic whatever might be the so-called sacrifice, the many renouncements of this world's goods by which one hopes to buy present or future happiness. Morality is then only an appearance; it only shows itself in useless practices. This is what made me tell an excellent lady who had not thought deeply, "You are more bigoted than religious." She answered smiling, "You speak in the same words that my spiritual adviser, an intelligent Jesuit father, recently used to me." "Well, so much the better; we agree on this subject."

All morality is utilitarian—that is what makes it so desirable—but it no longer applies to the isolated individual, to a little group of egoists; it embraces everything and becomes the morality of responsibility. It is

summed up in these two rational principles almost mathematically demonstrable, "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you," and its natural corollary, "Do to others what you would like them to do to you." It is admirably condensed in the words of Christ, "Love your neighbour as yourself," or as Marcus Aurelius said, "Love men with all thy heart."

We know this; we say it, we respect it, and we add, "It is fine, but it is impossible." We might just as well not recognise it. Doubtless it is difficult, and it would be a strange illusion to expect a prompt realization of this moral ideal. We are so far from it in nineteen centuries of Christianity that we appear to have gone away from it. But we cannot influence the minds of crowds except through individuals, by awakening in them an altruistic quality of human intelligence; we must address ourselves to reason without being discouraged by its weakness. Reason grows, and there is no obstacle that would prevent forever the development of moral intelligence. It is science—that is to say, knowledge—in theory; it is art in practice like all applied sciences.

VIII

MEDITATION

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MEDITATION

It is not necessary to incite man to think. Supposing that he sleeps eight hours a day, he thinks uninterruptedly during sixteen hours; in sleep he still dreams about what has previously occupied his mind. We might sometimes wish for a moment of rest for this ever-active machine. The heart, that slave condemned to strike regular blows day and night during an entire lifetime, might inspire pity, but at least it does not feel, like a tamed animal; it is not conscious of its misery. The mind, alas, is able to think! When it is sad, it laments its own lot; when it is glad, it dulls present joy by regret for the past and by fear for the future. Our poor brain has not an easy life, and what surprises me is not that there should be so many crazy people, but that our heads should be able to resist the continual procession of ideas and emotions which they produce—that fevered and often disordered activity.

We must live and earn our livelihood; hence the thought of man is concentrated before all else upon his professional activity. From the time when he wakes, the care of existence takes possession of him and pushes him to work. The streets are full of business people; many of them are anxious ones, who seem to look upon their tasks as a nuisance; others better disposed go to work as to a pleasure. This is because work is a pleasure in itself; it satisfies ambitious aspirations, artistic tastes, altruistic sentiments of duty. Beneficent custom is mingled with it; that always renders activity easier and diminishes fatigue. In moments of relaxation when man escapes his daily drudgery, he becomes a child again and is amused with anything. He runs breathlessly to see pass by four men headed by a drum; joins a crowd looking into the river without seeing anything unusual; is partial to any kind of show, to material amusements; he dines, intoxicates himself, flirts, or gambles. His day is divided between necessary work and recreation that is often puerile, and sometimes culpable. The best gifted are aristocratic in their pleasures;

they interest themselves in fine arts, in serious things. They are able to find some roses among the thorns, and for all that they are often more bored than those who, stunted in their development, enjoy life childishly; they suffer more from those inner contradictions which are called the discordances of existence.

This prosaic thought which directs one's professional activity, this tension of mind, this assiduity that makes one a statesman, a savant, an artist, a business man, a tradesman, an artisan, is not enough for one's happiness. It is not enough to follow one's trade, to accomplish one's material task like a soldier of the regiment of humanity, not enough to find means for recreation without falling into vice. There is something still more needful, more useful for everybody's happiness; it is to acquire the virtues that help human intercourse, that bring us inner satisfaction, which is superior to all superficial and contingent pleasures—in a word, to form character.

In a little book,[1] containing many suggestions, the Abbé Guibert, head of the Seminary

[1] "Le Caractère." Librairie Veuve Ch. Poussielgue, Paris, 1905.

of the Catholic Institute of Paris, writes: "We attain a definition of character, the usual result of many tendencies that conflict in the life of man. To give to tendencies favorable to good preponderance over vicious inclinations would be, consequently, the fundamental rule to lay down in the foundation of character." Then he adds: "To worldly people, ordinarily taken up with frivolity, or absorbed by work, we do not know better advice to give than to impress upon them the inviolable obligation of a quarter of an hour's reflection in the morning and at least five minutes at the end of the day."

For my part, I cannot recommend this method, it recalls monastic rules. In our agitated existence we might not always be able to reserve these poor twenty minutes, and this short meditation would be quite insufficient for moral development. Hours, rather than minutes, of reflection should be given to it. We can easily find them in the twenty-four hours of the day without neglecting our customary work. Let us concentrate to meditation, not a given time, but the scraps of time we use so badly during our waking

hours, those moments of vague thought when our minds play truant and, like the street urchin, do not always avoid foolishness. We must reflect always, before, during, and after action.

One day Franklin was asked how he happened to see clearly into problems of physical science. "By always thinking of them," he replied. It is the same with ethical order; we only come near the ideal by "always thinking of it," by examining everything by its light. It illuminates our path, prevents our making mistakes, and those that we do make are not quite regrettable if, after recognising the wrong road, we seek to return to the right one. "The beginning of wisdom is the knowledge of one's faults," said Epicurus. We need, then, a constant examination of conscience, and, if it is done in the right spirit, it never leads to unhealthy scruples, to that sulky Puritanism which clothes virtue in so austere a dress that we should feel tempted to throw ourselves in the arms of amiable folly. When we have created our moral ideal, after tasting the charms of virtue, after experiencing the hap-

piness it procures us, we no longer obey unwillingly a severe rule, a pedantic authority; we follow the natural bent of our desires, and we abandon ourselves to its comfort. Before acting in any capacity, we glance at the immediate and distant consequences of our acts; we act, so to speak, automatically under the single pressure of ethical sentiments collected in the depth of our minds. In action, the details of our deeds and gestures are in a measure regulated in advance, without our having to make an effort to conform our acts to our customary thought.

A young woman who certainly had nothing to reproach herself with, but who, it appeared, found a certain charm in fancy, said to me, "Well, then, we must always stick to the rails." "Yes—unless you would rather be derailed." Alas, we are derailed often enough, and there is no fear that this education of ourselves will become efficacious to the point of making virtue commonplace and tiresome; good subjects will never fail the future novelists. At least, let us avoid derailment—from moral carelessness or love of the picturesque.

After acting do not let us rest on the laurels we award ourselves or that others too easily bestow upon us. It is the time when self-criticism becomes useful.

In the numberless moments of idleness that we glean in the course of the day, when walking or dressing, when alone in the street, or among occupations that do not take concentration of mind, or at the end of the day, let us take a look at what we have done. We should not be satisfied with a rapid "satisfecit" or accept without reserve the approbation or recognition of others. Even praise should not blind us, and we should bring to light the secret motives that make us act and which are not always as noble as they appear at first sight.

Suppose, for instance, a doctor has devotedly cared for a patient—for the papers speak of such cases every day, and doctors are prodigal in their attentions. The patient is satisfied and shows his gratitude by word of mouth, or in a touching letter. Very well, but is that everything? Is it enough to pocket the compliments and become puffed up with the feeling of one's value? No. Do not let

this practitioner be afraid to criticise himself. He will discover, perhaps, that the social position of his patient was not without influence upon his apparently altruistic solicitude. Another day he will catch himself in the fact of his vanity, his principal anxiety having been to pronounce a clever diagnosis and to show his superiority over his confrères.

But this is human, we say; it is excusable. Certainly, but we excuse only that which is not good. It is no less our task constantly to purify our motives for action. Will this be too difficult? Do we need a special aptitude for psychological analysis that is accessible only to certain minds? Oh, no; we all have an amazing faculty when it is a question of sifting, not our own conduct, but that of our fellow men. We are all little La Rochefoucaulds when it comes to depreciating others, in revealing egotistical motives that we attribute to their actions.

Is not this knowledge of the human heart that we thus show a little suspicious? Should not we study these ugly faults in ourselves? Is it very charitable to lend them to others so easily? We have to settle the same sort

of questions every day, after we have grasped the value of this moralizing meditation. Do not let us say that time is lacking, since we find so much in which to belittle our neighbour.

I am struck with the time taken daily to acquire less important virtues, while so little is thought of the necessary work called formation of character. Our young girls work at the piano, give themselves up for hours to exercises as tiresome for them as for their neighbours. This would be all right if they at least accomplished their purpose and succeeded in giving pleasure, but the majority often give up very late this study, resulting in pure waste of time. Others become enthusiastic over painting and succeed only in increasing the number of "daubs." "Empty-heads" of both sexes take up lawn tennis. I have not found that they acquired by it the grace and beauty of the young Athenians returning from the palæstra. They affect an ambition to be a virile set—English training, play football, take up boating and cycling, and the newspapers report their "matches" with home or foreign teams. Some fence, take

Swedish or other gymnastics, and goodness knows what else. I understand that some classes teach how to cut pigeons' wings. Far be it from me to condemn the greater number of these amusements; they have their uses. But we must admit that they do not incite meditation, of which we have such great need. It is not possible in this sporting activity, in this hurly-burly of fashionable life. We need greater solitude, more intimate and personal reflection, and less reading.

Certainly it is good to learn the thoughts of others, but in literary culture we must turn less to the novelists who so often deck out vices than to the moralists of all times, and especially to the ancient philosophers, who have portrayed the human soul as the artists of their time fixed the ideal form of the human body in marble.

The entire human mind is exposed in the teachings of the two rival schools of the Stoics and the Epicureans in the "Manuel" of the slave Epictetus as in the "Thoughts" of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Seneca sums them up in his admirable letters to Lucilius,

in his penetrating studies on anger and peace of mind; in the book on "Benefits." In these works of our predecessors there is an inexhaustible treasure of accurate and fine thought.

But, above all, let us explore again and again to the depth of ourselves; during our active life criticise ourselves without pity and correct our faults. Let us learn to recognise with absolute sincerity towards ourselves the secret springs that induce our actions. Let us give up the task, as useless as it is wicked, of criticising others, and turn our scrutiny upon ourselves. The discovery of our faults will not discourage us if we look ahead, use past teachings to improve the future, and live in the constant thought of moral development.

When we have grasped the absolute necessity of this ethical culture of our ego, meditation becomes a necessity, a moral habit. Reflection is associated so easily with action that it does not retard psychological reactions. On the contrary, they are more rapid as they become habitual; constant anxiety for inner moralization in no way diminishes this apparent spontaneity; it is actually the result

of the rapidity with which thought follows thought and action thought.

We continue to obey our feelings; to those ideas that have become glowing by being meditated upon we become fixed like a psychological automaton of virtue.

This automatism is already shown in many ways among the majority of persons who have undergone only the most corrupting moral influence. Many people are not held back by fear of the police alone; the idea of theft, for instance, does not even come to them, so firmly fixed in their mind is the feeling that it is not right. For the most part, we are incapable of murder, of picking our neighbour's pocket, of knowingly breaking our given word. We have need of no effort to fight bad natural impulses, so powerful in the uncultivated man.

Might it not be the same, by a slow cultivation of the moral ego, in the practice of other virtues such as tolerance, diligence, patience, chastity, kindness? Might they not also take on this character of psychological automatism? I cannot see what should prevent absolutely and always this

ethical progress, for virtues spring, like respect for the prosperity of others, from rational bases. In this last century of civilization, of material progress, morality has been greatly neglected; it seems to have been forgotten. A Roman prelate, the incarnation of clerical absolutism, in commenting on the rupture of France with the Church, made this avowal: "We have to take stock of ourselves; we were wrong in putting dogmatic formulas in the front rank and leaving too little room for moral teaching. We are reaping what we sowed."

For the good of humanity, we must repair this error and cultivate the neglected ground. Every co-operation is good in this field, and the rationalists can shake hands with the believers, provided the latter are sincere and are able to see in ethics the jewel of religious and philosophical thought.

"Let us endeavor to think rightly; that is the principle of morality," said Pascal.

IX

TOLERANCE

IX

TOLERANCE

Tolerance is a virtue that we energetically demand from our opponents and one that we refuse to practise towards them.

Nevertheless, its practise would greatly facilitate dealings between men; it would be better to practise it a little every day than to save it for Christmas. "Peace on earth, good will to men"—we have been repeating that for nearly two thousand years without changing the condition of the world. Without tolerance there is perpetual warfare among individuals, among social groups, between peoples—that famous "struggle for existence" which Darwin observed among animals, and which has been adopted as the line of conduct for the human race. It seems as if we found in that natural law, which nevertheless has many exceptions, a useful justification for egoism. Tolerance would mean peace and progress brought about by the concurrence of all "harmony for existence"

taking the place of the "struggle," as Mme. J. Hudry-Menos so well said. With people who think differently from us, discussion would become possible, and then light would shine through. Not being irritated by the abuse of others, we would submit their ideas to the good-natured criticism of our reason. Sometimes we would keep our own opinions, finding them well founded; at others we would be persuaded; we would weaken. We would understand our opponents and we would show our motives, without having recourse to "I know," by which we cover our ignorance, or "I believe," in reply to which our opponent can only say, "Much good may it do you." Imagine for an instant how changed the aspect of things would be if this virtue, recognised as so desirable, had more than a theoretical vogue. We should no longer find intelligent persons surprised to learn that there is something monstrous in the phrase "religious wars," even as in the combination of the guillotine and worship of the Goddess of Reason.

People of quite opposite opinions—there would necessarily be fewer of them, because

people would oftener agree—would know how to overcome their differences, find a point of agreement, and mutually help in the pursuit of a common ideal. There is a form of tolerance that is the endowment of well-brought-up people; it consists in not buttonholing those who think differently from them; but this aristocratic tolerance is disdainful. There is a way of showing people they are idiots more hurtful than a blow. Sometimes tolerance is only due to a sceptical eclecticism; it is one method of believing nothing. It makes clever people say, "All the same to me anyway." This polite indulgence is not steady; it disappears as soon as political, religious, or philosophical passions arise to trouble the judgment.

It is often the same with tolerance resulting from a life in common with persons of different opinions, it does not always engender real respect for the ideas of others; force of circumstances imposes it. An abbé lately wrote me, with a cynical frankness, that he approved of religious tolerance only in mixed countries when nothing else was possible on account of the opponents' strength.

Political parties justify their compromises by necessity for defence, for the country's good. We hardly dare preach intolerance any longer, but we always find means to justify, to excuse it, if only on the score of retaliation.

Sincere, complete, and lasting toleration is based upon quite different conceptions. It springs naturally from knowledge of moral determinism. As soon as I know that my opponent is unable to hold another opinion than the one expressed, resulting from his innate or acquired mentality, I give him up; it would be absurd of me to expect him forthwith to think like me.

If Rousseau had better understood the idea of determinism, he would not have disfigured his "Contrat Social" by such phrases as this: "We must mercilessly banish from the republic all sectarians who say 'there is no salvation outside of our church,'" for such intolerance in matters of dogma necessarily invites intolerance, inequality, injustice, and dissensions in civil affairs. Rousseau did not see that he was guilty of precisely the very fault with which he accused

his opponents, and dared to write a few lines further on: "The state should then accept as members only those who adhere to this moral and social creed and should punish most severely, even with death, whomsoever, after having accepted it, denies it either by word or deed." This is the limit of intolerance. We constantly forget that the persons talking to us think with the heads that are upon their own shoulders and not with our heads, that they see things from another angle, in other colors; we forget that we should think as they do if we had the same temperament, if we had experienced the same educational, physical, intellectual, and moral influences. We may be astonished and pained to find them so far from us, to see them reject opinions that we consider established and indisputable. We have never the right to consider them responsible for their ignorance, to show them disdain; if we believe ourselves to be in a position to influence them, let us remember that flies are caught with honey and not with vinegar. Has not St. Francis de Sales said, "Better silence a truth than give it ungently and with bad grace?" Men often resemble

two persons, each having climbed on top of different hillocks to see the country. One says, "Look at that little steeple down there." "Steeple? What are you talking about, fool? It is a fir-tree." "You are mad; you call chalk cheese; it is a steeple." "You are mad yourself; it is a fir-tree." They are on the point of coming to blows when the idea of changing hillocks comes to them, and then they discover that both are right and might have avoided their abuse. From one mound a steeple is seen, from the other a fir-tree.

We should think of this little epilogue when arguing with opponents. Even if they are mentally unsound, they owe this defect to faulty education, and we shall not improve their minds by bad treatment. The idea of moral determinism is alone sufficient to insure tolerance, but this virtue bears upon another idea—that there are no absolute truths exclusive of facts.

We err in making will a faculty, since it is only a moment of thought; we err again by giving a concrete meaning to the word "truth," which is only abstract and signifies a relation. "Truth is the agreement of

thought with its object," say the philosophers. Leibnitz says, with greater exactness, "It is the agreement of the representations in our minds with things." It is even a license of speech to use the substantive here, for it is the adjective that designates the relation of things. It would be better to say to somebody who has appreciated a situation, "You have spoken truly," than to say, "You have spoken the truth."

Some persons taking a walk see a black mass in the fog. One says, "It is a carriage"; another, "Those are mules," a third thinks he sees a group of men. These are nothing but opinions of which none is proved.

By degrees they come near the object in question; they reach it and find it is a carriage. The first one was right; he spoke truly. Before that, a truth had not existed; the presence of the carriage is a material fact, and experience proved that the first person saw correctly; agreement was duly verified between his opinion and the fact.

It is thus clear that we can say, "It is true, you have spoken the truth," only when it is possible to see and establish without ques-

tion the existence of the fact. Absolute truth consequently can be conceived only in the order of material facts directly provable, or in the field of mathematical science, proceeding to demonstration by the path of logic.

These are the only truths recognised by all men in possession of common sense; algebra among the Japanese and Chinese is necessarily the same as among Europeans. All ideas whose agreement with their objects cannot be proved by experience, calculation, or by that logical intuition called common sense, are opinions, personal ideas; to call them truths is an abuse. We have no right to thrust them upon others or to blame them when they do not recognise these ideas. We may for custom's sake consider them as truths, base our convictions and our conduct upon them, and find our happiness in applying such ideas. We have the right to spread them abroad, to transmit what we think useful and salutary to others, to make proselytes; it is the spirit of altruism that urges us on if we are sincere.

It is not enough to be sceptical and to say with Voltaire, "All of us are made up of

weaknesses and faults; the first law of nature is to forgive one another our stupidity." We cannot hold our opinions as stupidities, at the moment when our reason dictates them. Let us be ready to revise our opinions when we recognise our mistake, but so long as we believe we are correct, we have the right to our convictions and to defend them warmly with the courteous and loyal arms of discussion.

In face of numberless unknown quantities in social problems, we are not ready to come to an understanding. When the intolerance of our opponents forces us, we must resist, and sometimes we must oppose force to force. In conflicts between parties and between peoples the struggle may become epic; it creates heroes. Unfortunately historical analysis shows that very often people are instigated and deluded by their governments, and that motives of vulgar interest determine wars. Certainly it was a swaggering answer that the French soldier made to the question, "What is the flag?"—"It is the reason why we have our heads smashed." It is painful to know how many brave lads have given their lives for an ambitious prince, or for

diplomatic intrigues, or for a case of personal interest to a few or to a social class. And to crown all, the belligerents, disobeying knowingly the most elementary precepts of moral and rational Christianity, implore the protection of the God of war upon their arms; when Mars flirted with Venus, it was logical; to-day it is an anachronism.

Great social conflicts fortunately do not occur every day; they rarely trouble the snug middle-class comfort we all hope for. There are even plenty of people who take no interest in politics, or the movement of ideas; they take their indifference for stoicism.

But where war becomes disastrous is in disturbing family relations, the sanctuary where we like to find rest. Every day peace is disturbed. In many families the gear creaks; the machine works painfully. I have not in view here those catastrophes, frequent nevertheless, which end in the rupture of family ties and which indicate in one or the other or both, wife and husband, parents and children, brothers and sisters, real lack of moral poise. I speak only of those lives relatively happy in which everything proceeds in an

orderly manner, according to middle-class morality, households in which the greatest harmony seems to reign. In looking closely at them, we find in these peaceful circles not only contrary opinions, which in themselves would be a benefit, but the bad humour created by reciprocal intolerance.

We are irritated when others do not share our opinions or our taste, all the time repeating as a protection, "We must not dispute about tastes and colours." We show others, if only by the sulky expression on our faces, the impatience their opposition causes us. Temper spoils things for both sides and dissensions increase. Weary of war, indifference is allowed to invade the hearth, the widest family circle, the clan of friends. Doubtless differences of opinion and ways of feeling are sometimes such that rupture is preferable. There are family and friendly unions from which nothing good is derived, either for one or the other, or for anybody else; divorce would be preferable. In spite of it all, they remain together; it is necessary, but then it becomes petty warfare, that is little dangerous but enervating; there are pin-

pricks every day. To avoid this torment, it is not enough to see the merits of reciprocal tolerance and to want to be patient. It is a fine thing to wish to be virtuous, but it is tiring, like continuous muscular effort, to undertake it voluntarily. That it may lose the character of muscular effort that is impossible to maintain, it must be automatic like that which has been called involuntary muscular action, it must result from a fundamental idea carrying tolerance naturally with it, and making it all the while easier, always less contingent.

The parent idea is that of the determinism of thought; it makes us understand that the state of mind of our interlocutor has its deep causes, that he is non-arbitrary, in his physiological and psychological past. To exasperate ourselves over others' mistakes is as absurd as to be angry with a negro because he is black. The only difference is that the negro will not become white in spite of your criticism, while he who thinks wrongly may change his opinion. But do not forget that you must then present yours to him in an acceptable form. You will succeed only by

respecting what he calls, with childish pride, his free thought; that is, if he is persuaded by your arguments and falls in love with the ideas you marshalled before the eyes of his understanding. If he remains faithful to his own, be sure he could not do otherwise. You must make up your mind to the inevitable difference, and live in peace with your opponent.

But tolerance does not stop there; it not only criticises the views of others good-naturedly; it leads to the examination of our own mentality. We then find, often with surprise, that we are just as obstinate as our opponent, and that, in discussion, we exact an effort at conversion from him that we should probably be incapable of ourselves. We conclude from this not that we should always yield, but that we have at least to watch over our minds and recommence always and ever the work of logical reflection; by helping ourselves particularly by others' opinions, however different they may be from our own. He who, through whatever excuse, neglects this constant revision of his thought, and at the outset is disdainful of others' opin-

ions, is intolerant. He hinders not only intellectual progress, which will get along without him, but moral progress, which results especially from the increasingly closer agreement among men.

Real tolerance makes us severer towards ourselves than towards others, for it is easier for us to influence our own minds than those of our fellow men. We dare to criticise ourselves without circumspection, without risk of wounding our susceptibility.

Let us use irony, that harsh speech which we so well know how to use against our opponents, to correct our own mentality, to repair our ideas, and to secure continual advances along the path of moral perfection!

X

INDULGENCE

X

INDULGENCE

Indulgence towards the conduct of others is what tolerance is towards their opinions. It is derived from the same principle, determinism of thought necessarily implying that of acts.

Intolerance is the cause of continual friction, which, for the benefit of every one, we ought to avoid. But these inconveniences are often supportable; when we have to reproach others only with delinquent opinions, we should forgive them as much for our peace of mind as for theirs. The absence of indulgence more deeply troubles social relations; it leads to the gravest injustice and creates situations often tragic. The instructor who remains fast to an inexact idea of responsibility all by itself, can reach only a variable kind of indulgence, that is contingent and consequently unjust. He showers reproaches upon the guilty person and makes him feel his full ignominy. Sometimes, when finding that, so

to speak, he has gone too far, he makes a kind effort, softens his tone, and seems to forgive on condition that the offence is not repeated. He still exacts obedience to moral rules of which he asserts the indisputable character, without showing reasons for making us love his moral ideal.

The guilty person feels these harsh reproaches and falls easily into a rebellious state that is unfavorable to every effort at self-correction. Nothing is sadder in this world than the existence of unfortunates whom we cannot reach and direct into the right path; instead of applying kindly persuasion, we have recourse to authority, which is always bad, in spite of any momentary success. Often after having lost years of precious time, we are obliged to realize that we have taken the wrong road; we give up the idea of defects in character and recognise a sickly condition, neurasthenia, or lack of balance; we do not see that we are establishing an absolutely artificial distinction.

The aspect of everything changes and becomes clear without the least suppression of thought, when determinism once is under-

stood, when we recognise the act as only the outcome of the idea, and that at the moment of action the man cannot obey another idea than that which is in his mind, however evil it may be.

"Yes," writes a friend, "the idea of determinism is a reason for indulgence towards others, and therefore a source of kindness. Do we not risk becoming too indulgent towards ourselves?" We are, indeed, so imbued with the vain idea of responsibility, and with the equally inexact idea of wrong, that we have some trouble in always thinking according to the data of determinism. We must break with old customs in order to familiarize ourselves with the idea; it seems as if language would have to be modified. This would be both very difficult and very useless.

I repeat, we may keep the term liberty, if by it we mean only that our activity is not hindered by any obstacle foreign to our thinking ego; that is to say, by material impossibilities, by bodily sickness, even by confirmed mental disorders disturbing the mechanism of our thought for a greater or lesser time.

I fully accept the word "responsibility" on

condition that we distinguish and define the sanction without which it does not exist. I do not ask to have the word will taken out of the dictionary, but its meaning must be explained. It is easy to see that a motive not created by us precedes the will, and that the latter is determined by the motive.

The word "wrong" is entitled to its full value, but we must define its signification. Epictetus said, "To deceive ourselves is a fault. To avoid all faults of this sort the Stoic applied himself to the study of syllogisms, to the solution of captious reasonings, to the subtlest dialectics."[1] This means that moral intelligence is needed. We acquire it by education, not through the will. Rational indulgence in no way applies to the act itself considered as bad; it does not mean indifference in regard to evil, such as that of sceptics who care for no moralizing as to desires and who, discouraging all initiatives, go away repeating, "Youth must have its fling; we must howl with the wolves, or *Homo homini lupus.*" I like better the saying, "For every

[1] "Manuel d'Epictète," translated by Guyau. Paris, Ch. Delagrave, p. xxiii.

sin, forgiveness, so long as it is not used as an anticipated excuse for vice." The determinist preserves intact a horror of evil, and the ideal notion of good; he imperturbably seeks a realization for himself and for others; with all his power and in spite of failures, he wishes to add to this ethical perfecting of human personality. The beacon-light of the moral ideal shines in his eyes with an increasing brilliancy as his conscience is enriched by the facts of experiences.

It is in the presence of the culprit, of the fallen man, that the determinist recovers all his indulgence, forgetting the past, however horrible it may be, in order to think of the future. In a flash he sees physical, intellectual, and moral influences, and the hazard of environment, which have made the individual what he is up to now, but without concluding that these influences will continue to act in the future. Carried away by this clear and healthy view of determinism, he uses a sweeping stroke to erase the past of others with plenary indulgence. "To understand everything is to forgive everything," said Lacordaire.

The guilty person already is or will be pun-

ished; he will feel the effects of responsibility to society, which must punish both from the necessity of personal defence and in order to secure, by means still summary it is true, obedience to its necessary laws. According to his mentality, the guilty person will feel these penalties in his soul, or he will accept them, recognising the value of the moral ideas that dictated them. The delinquent himself suffers physically or morally from this situation, either from the natural consequences of guilty acts, or from remorse, which oftener than one may think attacks the guilty man who braves it out with a cynical indifference.

According to the idea of believers in a future life, the culprit will undergo unknown penalties in another world such as his act merits—a question we cannot even touch upon, seeing how daring it would be to prejudge the intentions of divinity: why add useless contempt to the sufferings that sooner or later will fall on the guilty, or that have already tormented him? Would this not be the donkey's kick? Knowingly or unknowingly, we all in life play the part of instructor. Parents exercise it over their children, mas-

ters over pupils, priests over their flocks. This educational influence less admittedly exists between husband and wife, brother and sister, between friends; sometimes surreptitiously it acts backwards, children influencing parents. Mentor without knowing it felt the yoke of Telemachus.

The physician enjoys a privileged position, from which to judge the difficulties of education, to discover hidden threads that move the human marionette and to pull the good ones, those which are adapted to the rôle to be played. When he is not intrenched in surgery, which is a manual art, and does not delight in an artificial medicine which has recourse only to physical agents or drugs, he sees the enormous part that mentality plays, not only in moral conduct, but in the pathological conditions that are its consequences. He soon finds that not always are real patients brought to him, but healthy people who think badly—not only the recognised madmen, but those who to-day are called half mad. His logic compels him to say that while speaking of the half mad, we must think of fractions of madness smaller and smaller,

and he comes to the conclusion that there are only degrees between defect of character and sickness of mind.

In every case in which man thinks and acts badly, and leaves the ideal path of good, the determinist sees the causes that brought about the deviation. He knows that one cannot suppress past mistakes; it is only for the future that one can introduce new determining motives. Theoretically, and as an abstract of physical means adapted to second moral work, they may be as useful in regard to defects as to sickness; the treatment will remain the same. Its goal is the reparation of false ideas, moral orthopædia; to pursue this goal, we have no other aid than our reason, always made finer by self-culture.

We shall not succeed, or shall succeed only with difficulty, when the mental deformation results from physical or psychic causes that are too powerful, and before all are due to heredity, or to cerebral disorder; we shall succeed better if the evil results from fatigue, during a state of passing sickness, or from psychasthenia induced by regrettable conditions of education and moral contagion.

By withdrawing the subject from his environment, by procuring him the rest that favors the work of thought, we can make him care for ideas new to him—not by dictating them as absolute truths, but by submitting them to him as accepted by us, as recognised to be good by people whom he loves or respects, by displaying to his eyes the advantages, often material—such as a successful career or social position, but above all moral, inner, and permanent happiness—that will result from his conversion to good. It is his place to take up these directing ideas if he can.

To use a word which nowadays is abused, we obey alien suggestions only when they become autosuggestions. It is not enough for us to find opinions submitted to us to be correct; there are steps leading from comprehension to profound conviction; our feelings must enter in, and we must be carried away by them.

In comparing a man confronted with ideas to a prince in the presence of prospective brides, I said he would marry the one who pleased him best; but love, they say,

cannot be commanded. We may use efforts to awaken love in him whom we wish to see married, we may praise the charms of the young girl, or whisper to him the amount of her dot; but the rest is his affair; he escapes from our yoke to fall under that of his own mentality—and the man calls that his liberty.

We lack indulgence and patience towards our fellow beings when, without being really ill, they exhibit those variations of humour to which we are all more or less subject. Under the influence of fatigue that apparently is not justified by the work done, when in states of organic disturbance caused by certain physiological and psychological phenomena peculiar to our being, we feel influenced in our mental life; we become sullen and discouraged, without serious reasons; we appear rebellious, wicked, and we are sorry, but our nerves govern us, and we are unable to expel the enemy that is within us. We should more easily escape if those who surround us had determinist indulgence in their hearts; if they could recognise our weaknesses as their own. They forget that they are not always what they would like to be, and they

nag us harshly. Impressionable people often suffer real martyrdom in their families; subject to constant variations in their state of mind, they are misunderstood, and the reproaches they receive, in an evident intention of moral orthopædia, take away their last vestige of self-control. Doubtless a word may often do them good, on occasions even a reproach, provided it be friendly. The person who is impatient and fretful suffers; he does not feel well without being able to say what is the matter. We should regard him as a patient who needs repose or encouragement, and not as a culprit who is willingly sullen. Let us act towards our fellow beings like those clear-sighted mothers who, far from being severe with the irritable child, explain its humour by saying it has not had enough sleep and then puts it gently in its cradle. That is a practical determinism of which we have great need in our relations with adults.

In this work of education, every feeling of irritation, of contempt, or disgust towards the culprit is a hinderance; no crime is great enough to allow us to cover the individual with the legitimate moral repulsion which his

act inspires. By acting thus, we commit not only a grave mistake in educational tactics, but also flagrant injustice.

Some friends, unable to deny the fact of determinism, feared that this conception might create moral nonchalance, laxity founded on the idea that we cannot help ourselves. This danger does not exist when the idea of determinism has been properly grasped. Determinism is not predestination; it establishes only past facts and the material and moral circumstances that determined them. The future is still unknown, and man is therefore free, not in the philosophical meaning of the word, but in the sense that he can henceforth obey the new ideas that attract him, having been taught by his own experience or by advice.

On reflection, we shall recognise that there is no present for the dying, nor consequently for the living. Present applies only to what is in a static condition or in repose. A train which has stopped at a station is present. Taking an imaginary line of division, the cars to the right of the observer have passed, those to the left are yet to come. Neither is

there any present in our existence; there are only past and future periods; what we commonly call the present is the immediate future. The future is ever unknown, and actual indulgence can apply only to the past.

Let us take an example: A young man came to me because he drank; he himself sought the consultation in the hope of being cured. With the plenary indulgence we owe to strayed sheep, I pointed out to him the various reasons why he should wish to give up the habit, such as the care of his physical health, of his material and moral future, and the remorse that caused him unhappiness. I induced him to regain courage, to appreciate a worthier life, as it would restore the happiness of his family. He listened and answered sadly, "What can you expect? It is stronger than I." "My dear sir," said I, "it is needless to tell me that; you speak of the past and it is, in fact, passed; we can change nothing there. Your passions have been stronger than the motives of reason. Let us speak no more of the past. It is the future that I talk of."

"I have so often tried to correct myself," said he, "without succeeding, and for all that

I have quite recognised the value of the moral reasons you have set before me."

"Yes, I see, you judge the future from the past. As we say, who has drunk, will drink. Do you not know that the abstinence and temperance societies have given the lie to this discouraging proverb? Besides, in the name of logic, I don't allow you to speak of the future. One has always the right to say, 'It has been stronger than I,' but one cannot say, 'It will be stronger than I.' Doubtless the past can make us fear the future, but do not forget that the latter does not belong to us. Between now and to-morrow, or later, events in your material, intellectual, or moral life may happen that will determine you upon another line of conduct. Even suppose that you relapse this evening, to-morrow, the day after or many times again; every time you confide your fault to me, I will maintain the same plenary indulgence for a past that nobody can change. Each relapse belongs to past periods of life. Of the future neither of us knows anything yet. It is the same with the mistakes in our life as with railroad accidents; a train is derailed; it is past, but this

is no reason that the next one also should be derailed. Is it not probable that the switchman detected in fault will watch more efficiently in the future?

"Reflect, observe always more clearly how your conduct leads you into a quagmire; the more you see the danger, the more you will shrink appalled from it. There has never been more than one way to correct a vice; it is to see clearly the dangers it entails for us. There is only one way of acquiring a quality; it is to see plainly the advantages it brings us. Outside of that is no wisdom. Continue, not to make vain efforts of will, like a man uselessly waving his arms, but to acquire by reflection, by my counsels which are drawn from experience, that moral clear-sightedness which will preserve our always difficult journey along the pathway of life. Man penetrates this moral world like an explorer in an unknown country. He often loses his way and for guide has only his instinct, this experience and that of travellers who have gone before. When he perceives that he is astray, he should retrace his steps and seek the right road. What would you say of the person

who, instead of asking for information, should lie down by the side of the road and cry over his past mistakes?

"Go home and come back to me in several days. You will always find the same welcome, the same patience, but also, understand, the same arguments, because there are no others."

These principles apply to all. Far from weakening the moral idea, they render it always clearer, more authoritative. They give to the instructor the indulgence and untiring patience necessary to his work. They kindle in him as in his pupil desire for good, and it is for this community of moral aspirations that the mental understanding exists; they walk hand in hand towards the ideal that they pursue. It is easier to put the erring on the right path by going with them than by pointing out with a sullen gesture the road to follow.

It is an error to consider determinism as an obstacle to morality. The pillow of sloth would be more likely to be found in a conception of original sin, which would forever prevent us from following the right road except

by profiting from a forgiveness that we cannot lay claim to. One day, in expressing to a brave sister of charity my surprise at seeing one of our patients, an abbé, a slave to the commonest childishness, she answered: "What do you expect? He is a man like others." Without doubt, thought I; I know it only too well. I am past being astonished at human weakness. But what surprised me was to see a sincere piety serve only ulterior ends and become useless in practical life.

Another day while encouraging an intelligent priest I caught myself blushing. It seemed to me that what I had told him was altogether too simple; to lay these ethics before a theologian was like taking water to the sea. I made excuses for having spoken words that seemed to me so superfluous. "Yes, doctor," he answered, "I know all that quite as well as you; I have taught these truths, but I did not see that they might have such practical application."

The devout Christian's look, which is always fixed upon the beyond, sometimes makes him forget life in this world. He often has little esteem for human wisdom. Does

he not run a risk in excusing his own weaknesses by discounting the chances of redemption? Determinism, which can apply only to the past, authorizes no future weakness; on the contrary, it expects new determining influences in the future. It is an element of progress, because it allows every culprit to turn over a new leaf with new zeal, holding clearly, but free from bitterness, the memory of past mistakes.

XI

HUMILITY

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HUMILITY

Humility is a decried virtue; one thinks it necessary to bow down to it only when accompanied by the adjective "Christian"; even then it is not understood. Since it is so rare in this world, where vanity plays such a great part, we must conclude that it is a virtue foreign to natural mentality. Nevertheless it is the most rational virtue, and the easiest to deduce from the simplest facts.

It is contrary to pride, but what should we be proud about in this world, where we have received everything. If life is often tragic, it has also its farcical side; nothing is more grotesque than human vanity, which, like a common coquette, decks itself out in all sorts of gewgaws.

One man is proud of the name he bears, or the title that precedes it. He has done nothing to acquire it, nor to preserve it intact; he has often tarnished its worldly lustre, still

he feels the blue blood course in his veins. Even when an elaborate education, acting upon a shrewd intelligence, has freed him from vulgar arrogance, he nearly always allows a feeling of his superiority to break through. Supposing that his ancestors distinguished themselves in the crusades, in my opinion that was not due to him.

In the little world of people well born, distinctions are still made between the great and the small nobility. This aristocracy struts when a great name is allied to fortune; it becomes more unobtrusive when money is lacking, but it does not fear to regild its coat of arms by an alliance with a family of parvenus.

He who finds a million in his cradle looks contemptuously upon the man who has raked it up out of common business, and the latter returns the compliment through pride in his intellectual superiority. The successful painter, sculptor, man of letters, or musician smiles with pity at the sight of these geese; is not he himself possessed of the seal of genius? The good Beethoven reproached Goethe with obsequiousness towards court people, al-

though he was conscious of his own personal value, saying, "Are we not superior to all that crowd?" He did not stop to think that he had received from nature that genius of which he was so proud; he was giving vanity for vanity. The savant makes the same mistake when, with apparent modesty, he smiles at human stupidity, at the void he discovers in worldly intelligence. But that does not prevent him from seeking favours of the great and ardently coveting honorary distinctions which will place him above his colleagues.

Everywhere in the most intellectual circles one meets with this base emulation instead of disinterested work, performed in a spirit of human responsibility.

Yes, one will say, it is truly absurd to be proud of a superiority that we owe to the chance of birth or to the munificence of Providence, and for a long time satire has lashed these eternal vanities with its whip; but there is a legitimate pride, that of the "self-made man" who, starting from below, has conquered everything by his energy. There is something personal and self-willed in that, an effort we must admire and praise. We should

encourage this power of energy by bowing down to it, whenever it is met, in all social classes.

This judgment seems to me unjust. We are no more deserving of credit for having what is called energy than for being born capitalists. Our moral qualities also suffer the yoke of heredity; they grow by education as our capital at the savings-bank increases from interest and by benevolent gifts. Have we all a substantial bank-book or generous benefactors? I never grasped the meaning of those ideas, so commonly used, *merit* and *demerit*, or rather I believe that one is deceived in applying them to the individual instead of reserving them for the ideal of virtue that an individual realizes.

It is ridiculous for a woman to be proud of her beauty; did she make herself beautiful? How can we accord her credit for it? Let her enjoy it; let her spread around her the charm of her grace, dividing with it the charm of kindness. To be a coquette would be to reveal an intellectual deficiency, a shallow mind she cannot help possessing, and her beauty would decrease in our eyes. The public shows wis-

dom when it says of a woman, "She is pretty, but she knows it."

An intelligent man is no longer allowed to be proud of his superiority; he did not make that intelligence; he received it. Let him use his capital and make it increase for the good of all; let him sympathize with others' misery, or, so to speak, share with them the good he has received.

Among my friends is a doctor who has a fine career of professional devotion behind him. He said one day to me: "An event happened in my life that decided my career, as a man, and had a greater influence on my life than all previous teaching. I spent several holiday weeks with an old English pastor. He by no means bored me to death with moral lessons, but on leaving him, gave me a friendly slap on the shoulder and said, 'Young man, remember there are only two duties to be performed in this world; the first is, give every value to your personality that it can stand; and the second, put it at the service of others.' " We could not express in better terms the idea of responsibility for service to which we must all devote our gifts,

whether they be the result of heredity or of education, the sole two factors to which we owe all that we possess.

There is no place anywhere for pride, for a contemplative admiration of our physical, intellectual, or moral ego. All aristocracies are destined to disappear because of a constantly growing apprehension that they are only privilege. They are always exposed to envy, because, even when they do not denote the vulgar superiority created by fortune, and even when they are the result of the gift of intelligence, they create material advantages and accentuate social inequalities which are painful to him who feels himself inferior.

The Greeks had three words to express "the best": ἄριστος, the superlative of good, which applied to people who were "good" without reference to precisely what that superiority was due, the same being admitted without dispute by those who claimed it; κράτιστος, which signified "the most powerful" and characterized a certain domination by brute force, or by energy of action; and βέλτιστος, which indicated truly moral superiority, which was that of honesty and virtue.

We need a "beltistocracy," an "aristocracy of the heart," which, conscious of the determinism of human things, as well in Christian conception as in rationalist philosophy, shall only keep before it this precept of the English pastor: Develop our capital of virtues, the aptitudes we have received, advancing always towards the perfecting of our personality, not for the sake of personal advantages, but in order that humanity entire may profit by them. This aristocracy would not be exposed to envy; it would have no fear of revolutions, but would be precious to those who would possess it, in that it would give them happiness while they sent it broadcast. While material fortunes if divided would probably put each one in a mediocrity bordering on poverty, moral wealth will increase in proportion to its distributions; for it is inexhaustible. The so-called cultivated classes have only one way in which to dam the revolutionary torrent; that is to teach virtue by practising it. Is there not still time?

True humility has its source in this sentiment, so easy to grasp, that we owe nothing to ourselves, that we have received every-

thing, whatever may be our ideas of the person of the giver. There is no place for distinctions; the principle applies to moral riches as to material wealth, to the gifts of heart and head as to money and honors.

We must attack these ideas of merit and demerit, not in a spirit of disparagement, but in a feeling of social equity nobler than sanctimonious admiration, often accompanied by the envy that is shown towards success. We should feel the charm of virtue. We can and we ought to love him who practises it, but he has no right to be proud of it. People are able to recognise the virtue of the man who, having performed a courageous act, shrinks from recompense in the feeling that he has merely done his duty.

We can recognise a fine soul and love it, as we admire a beautiful woman or a work of art. Our homage should be given to beauty and not to the person who, without being able to count it a merit, happens to represent it to our eyes. Even for children in schools we should suppress distinctions and recompenses that encourage precocious vanity, and maintain only those that are able to develop true

emulation, which consists not in leaving others behind, but in advancing with them, hand in hand, along the road to perfection.

The idea of responsibility should take an increasingly larger place in young hearts, less shrivelled than older ones. Man has no greater enemy than his egoism; that is the idea which must be planted in the deepest part of the human soul. It is the only condition of moral progress.

Humility, properly understood, suppresses in one blow not only pride and irritability, but also timidity, which is more directly derived from it than one might think. It has been said, with reason, "Timidity is pride." All timidity has its source in self-love, in the fear of being ill judged, in the sensitiveness which recoils before a danger. There is also the irritability of the violent, which is more disagreeable for others than for him who feels it. This defect, so wide-spread, greatly hinders social relations by rendering people inaccessible to the most benevolent advice and consequently screens them from that educational influence of which we all have need.

One requires humility to accept reproach, above all when it is merited. On the other hand, one needs indulgence and tact to know how to tender it without wounding others.

This extreme irritability is frequent in unbalanced mental conditions that we file away under the label *neurasthenia;* it is a cause of tragedy in families. Thus a natural defect, often a family one, is always difficult to fight. Still one sees persons who, having made their lives hard by their impatience, succeed under reproach in losing this irritability precisely because they recognised its inconvenience. One of my patients told me he had got rid of this irritability, and when I asked him how he had done it, he answered: "Oh, by reflecting that it was always myself who 'paid the piper.'" That is a precious reflection we should never forget when we yield to our passions; it is always ourselves who "pay the piper," and it is not even for a temporary gratification, because the feeling to which we give ourselves up is as disagreeable as its sequel.

To recognise that we are always punished according to our sins is practically the best

method of correcting our faults. Prudence ought first of all to be taught to those who complain about situations which they themselves have created. Still there is some egoism in avoiding evil solely because of its unpleasant consequences to us. The thinker, without neglecting this reasonable prudence, will know how to raise himself to higher conceptions and create an ideal of good, of which the neglect will produce a more bitter remorse than simple regret.

It is curious how few people have realized the close bond uniting timidity to self-love. I have the habit of giving a concrete example to people not very clear-sighted. A girl plays the piano. One day an old friend comes to spend the evening with the family. Prevented by infirmity from going to concerts, she first complains of being deprived of all musical pleasure and begs the young girl to play for her. If the girl at this moment had only one idea in her mind, the wholly altruistic one of giving pleasure, she would seat herself at the piano without embarrassment; she would play just as she was able, and everybody would be satisfied. But charity is the least of her

cares; invited to play, she wishes to have at least a little success. The request, it appears, is unfortunate; she has not studied recently; she has not the necessary music; she does not play by heart and cannot read at first sight. She is very embarrassed, torn by two contrary feelings, on the one side the wish to be appreciated, on the other the fear of not succeeding. From this inner contradiction timidity is exactly the result. Then she blushes like a peony, stutters, and leaves the piano, very sorry to have been placed in such an unpleasant position. Examine your timidities by the light of this example; we all have them, and you will always recognise self-love at the bottom of this defect, which sometimes dares to cover itself with the robe of humility.

We must not confound timidity with fear, with apprehension. We may experience fear in face of a difficult task, be tempted to retreat before an obstacle; often we have apprehensions about the future and only approach it tremblingly. From this, we feel emotions that may hinder our activity, but this is fear, not yet timidity. This special form of fear awakens only when we think of ourselves,

when we think of the effect we are going to produce. This painful feeling is not in itself blamable; it comes from the need of approval, from that "organ of approbation which phrenologists place at the top of the head, next to self-love." George Combe, in his "Manuel de Phrénologie," says apropos of this: "A reasonable development of approbativeness is indispensable to an amiable character. It induces an individual to make every effort to please, to suppress a thousand little signs of personal interest, and to subdue the numerous inequalities of character for fear of incurring blame." Indeed, the desire to please has its moral advantages; a certain timidity is a charm, but it becomes a hinderance when this thirst for approbation is too intense; it develops too great care about others' opinions, the fear of "what will they say about it," of ridicule, and is thus harmful to independence of spirit, because inducing fear of failure. This amiable form of vanity engenders timidity.

What shows clearly that timidity begins only with self-contemplation is that it takes hold of us when we are alone. We may be

fearful and anxious in the face of some work we have undertaken, but we blush only when some one looks over our shoulder and surprises us in our awkwardness. Amateur actors will play with the greatest assurance during rehearsals; but they will often lose their heads at a public performance.

Timidity can also become collective, and thus seize an entire company which is hoping for success. It may even take the form of altruism, when we tremble for a speaker, or for an actress at her début. But do not let us misapprehend matters; often interest for the person is very slight, and it is because we put ourselves in his place that we suffer the torture of timidity. Indeed, on certain occasions, we can feel the blush of timidity mount to our cheeks even while alone; a mere reminiscence is enough, a mental representation that calls up a situation wounding to our self-love.

There are professions in which it is hard to suppress self-love; they live by it; this is the case with creative artists, musicians, speakers, all those who come before the public with the hope of gaining not only its

bounty, but also its suffrage. There is only one method for these seekers by which to preserve their assurance; this is to raise their power to the height of their ambitions; they must become so talented that their success is certain in the eyes of a public whose ability is often limited. I think that great artists, such as a Beethoven or a Mozart, would not experience any fears, because they live too thoroughly in their music to seek applause. For all those who have not to strive for worldly success, there is a better means of lessening timidity; it is to suppress self-love, the wish to be appreciated for one's self. One then disappears behind the task one undertakes. We may still have qualms on the possibility of accomplishing it, but our person is not in question; we no longer bring up the idle and always dangerous question, How shall I look?

We only arrive at this impersonal view which shields us from timidity through true humility. Forgetfulness of ourselves enables us to kindle enthusiasm for a cause, to become the apostle of it. The political man carries a crowd when he defends a cause dear to

him; the speaker remains calm when he has something to say and only seeks success for the idea which he lays before his audience. The more convinced he is, the more wrapped up in his subject, the less will he think of his own person, of his entrance, the bow he is about to make to the audience, of the elegant preparation that he has prepared. One even sees the blush of timidity upon the cheek of seasoned speakers, but that will pass; either they will become inured by growing consciousness of their talent; or, better still, their conviction will increase.

It seems to me that it would be well to recognise the vanity of self-love, to see the traps it sets for us. In the tragic comedy that represents human life, we are only actors, figures; it is conduct that clothes us all, some in rich doublet and feathered hat, others in peasants' drugget. Let us play our parts, but do not let us think ourselves great lords. Stripped in the greenroom of the ornaments that have been furnished us, we should all be found needy, dependent the one upon the other. Is not that a reason for humility?

XII

MODERATION

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MODERATION

"Do you wish to enrich Pythocles? Then do not add to his riches; subtract from his desires." How happily expressed is this counsel of Epicurus to Idomene. In every period the advantages of a simple life, exempt from ambitions, have been preached—the charms of the *aurea mediocritas;* but one is always tempted to suspect this renouncement of the world's goods when those who recommend it have no need of pity; one jokes about the golden mediocrity, insinuating that it ought to be gilded. Seneca was reproached with having vaunted the advantages of poverty while accumulating riches, and one might be tempted to reply to such extollers of virtue: "You are right; one ought to be contented with one's lot, when it is good."

Indeed, there is a limit to everything, and to-day we would have no desire to imitate Diogenes and live in a tub, even while that

might spare us many of a householder's worries. It would not be good to simplify life to that extent, which would bring us to the irresponsibility of the Neapolitan lazzaroni.

Desire under various forms is the only spring of human activity. I would say stretch it to the topmost notch in order that it may loosen life's energy. But something must direct this force without diminishing it, and this something, too often forgotten, is the spirit of responsibility. Let us see in every act the probable consequences not only to ourselves, but to others, to humanity entire. Only then will our activity become fruitful to all, like that of pioneers who have been able to make fortunes by opening immense fields of activity to their fellow men. Even then egoism must not lift up its head and become dominant; that would deprive the result of much of its value. Egoism posing as altruism is to be blamed; it is rare that the shopkeeper or merchant who becomes rich receives the gratitude of those whose daily bread he provides. Everything in the ingratitude of the working class is not base envy. I do not remember who it was that said: "A man of

mind and heart only makes a fortune unwittingly."

Every one is permitted to seek the good things he wants and in this pursuit to use every energy at his disposal, but let him beware of abandoning ethical principles. Advantages acquired give him power for good, ability to help others less gifted with fortune. Intelligence and moral clear-sightedness, which can not be bought with money, are none the less hard to acquire. Let us remember that we belong to the privileged ones equally whether we have the luck not to suffer too greatly from moral short-sightedness or whether we have intelligence, physical health, and money. Let pity spring up forthwith for the innumerable ill-starred people whom we cruelly reproach, if not for their poverty, at least for their stupidity and, above all, for their immorality.

It is said the prettiest girl can give only what she has. In the same way a man can use only such gifts as he has received. We should enrich our fellow-beings with moral views at the same time that we help them materially; we should give a hand to help

them on board the vessel, often luxurious, in which we undertake life's voyage, instead of hitting on the head with an oar others who are drowning.

However legitimate are the desires for welfare that civilization has created, let us beware of being dominated by them. Our duty towards others is to repress such personal ambition; it is even in the interests of our own peace to suppress it. The pain of failure becomes so much the greater as the desire to succeed becomes stronger. "Stop hoping and you will stop fearing," said Hecaton. Indeed, fear, that feeling so contrary to our happiness, is always mingled with our hopes; it is born of irresolution, of trouble for the future. We poison the present by these apprehensions no less than by the useless memory of past misfortunes.

In his "Art de Vivre," [1] Dr. Toulouse tells that in China, in painful situations, a current dictum is "make the heart small." If this picturesque expression were to encourage egoistical indifference, drying up of the heart, I should scarcely admire this piece of

[1] Paris Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1906.

Chinese wisdom. But it may mean also that, in passing through the dangers of life, one should not swell one's heart with ambitions, and make it too full; in that sense the counsel is worthy that of Epicurus. Charles Wagner, in admirable moral sermons,[1] has clearly shown the necessity for returning to a simple life, to that moderation of desire which not only assures its realization, but enables us to avoid the rock of unhealthful pleasures hidden beneath the flower of elegant luxury. Above all, let us never forget others. "There is no pleasant possession if it is not shared," said the ancient philosophers in the precision of their Græco-Latin thought; the letters from Seneca to Lucilius scintillate with pearls of moral teaching.

Ambition becomes still more harmful when it seeks after honours, notoriety, domination over others. This thirst for spurious popularity is associated with the hope of easy gain, and warps the mentality of those who appear the best-gifted men. It creates scepticism towards every quality, it ruins the

[1] C. Wagner, "La Vie Simple." Armand Colin & Cie, Paris.

spirit of truth and spreads among the masses, so stupidly subject to suggestion, a greedy tendency towards the "get-there" spirit.

Entire countries are infected by this corruption, and one asks how people will ever get out of the condition. The increasing agglomerations of great towns favor the extension of the evil; it infects small country towns, without in return bringing the richness of the artistic and literary life, that fine culture which, in spite of its faults, keeps its moralizing value.

The liberal, scientific, or artistic professions are not shielded from these worldly ambitions, from the egoistical search after success. A shameless mercantile spirit has invaded these careers that should appear to develop altruism. Sincerity is lost in an anxiety to succeed, to get ahead of others, although the talents we have the luck to own should be shared and exploited for the good of all. "Noblesse oblige" should be the adage of privileged ones.

There is a point upon which attention has been too seldom fixed when recommending moderation in our desires; this is health. We

must turn here to the ancients in order to recover the idea of patience towards disease, that stoical philosophy which not only helps to support us in evils, but diminishes or cures them. Listen to this letter of Seneca addressed to a slightly neurasthenic friend:

"I am going to tell you how consoled I am after having always insisted that the principles upon which I leaned would act upon me like medicine. Honest consolation becomes in itself a remedy, and everything that lifts up the soul strengthens the body. My studies have saved me; I attribute my recovery, my return to health, to philosophy; I owe my life to it, but that is the least of my obligations. My friends also have greatly contributed to my cure; their exhortations, their cares, and their conversation have relieved me. You must know, my dear Lucilius, that nothing aids and sustains a sick person like marks of affection from his friends; nothing is better fitted to divert his thoughts from the expectation and fear of death. It seemed to me that I should never die, since they would survive me; it seemed that I lived, if not with them, at least by them. I did not

expect to render up my soul, but to transmit it to them. That is what decided me to take care of myself and to endure all my pain; otherwise, it would have been a wretched thing, after having had the courage to die, not to have enough to live."

Seneca wrote these beautiful words after recovering from a severe illness, during which he had thought of freedom by suicide. He finishes his letter with a fine satire on the medical customs of former times; men have changed their evils since they have been complicated by a crowd of therapeutic methods and innumerable medicines.

"Adopt then this form of treatment. The doctor will advise your walking and taking other exercise; will forbid inactivity, to which bad health is only too closely allied; will prescribe reading aloud and breathing exercises; will point out what food you must take, when you are to take wine to give you strength, when to stop it so as not to provoke your cough. But I not only give you a remedy for this illness, but a remedy for all your life: despise death. Nothing distresses us when we have ceased to fear it."

How far we are from this mentality! To-day there is need of physical health that leads us straight away from coddling and hypochondria. The world is full of worrying people who anxiously watch their weakest organic functions, and at the least sign of disturbance conjure up the horrible spectre of death. The moment their health declines from accidental and passing causes, they think themselves lost; they are not satisfied with a confidential physician who, as a friend, would know how to calm them and add to his therapeutics, always judicious, some moral-bearing advice; they go from doctor to doctor, trying every system, swallowing drug after drug, seeking something new among the specialties that pharmacy and modern chemistry have put on the market.

To-day we understand, perhaps even better than in the eighteenth century, the somewhat disconcerting letter that Dr. Tronchin wrote to a compeer of Montpellier, the physician of Voltaire and Rousseau, in which he asked if the existence of medical art was a blessing to humanity. Tronchin here agrees with Rousseau, who carefully shelters his

Émile from doctors, and writes: "A feeble body weakens the mind. Hence the reign of medicine, an art more pernicious to men than all the evils it pretends to cure. For myself, I do not know of what diseases we cure the doctors, but I know that they give us many fatal ones—cowardice, pusillanimity, credulity, terror of death; if they cure the body, they kill courage."

What a hue and cry this scepticism would raise among our modern Esculapiuses! Is it because the situation has changed and that, by desperate work, we shall soon find a remedy for all ills? Alas, no!

Doubtless medical art has made progress. Surgery, in particular, assumes a high place; it attacks every organ, the brain, the spinal marrow, even the heart—this it lays bare and repairs. We have only to close the window which we open in the breast; which has no longer any more right to respect than the stomach, which we can almost empty of its contents.

I have no idea of slighting this brilliant flight of surgery; I believe that, when our operators are able to deliver us from an in-

jury or improve our situation, we should be very wrong to let faint-heartedness, fear of pain, or that vague, unreasoning fright that the word "operation" awakens, stand in the way. We owe brilliant conquests to these illustrious successors of former barbers. To-day we can give ourselves up to their expert and conscientious hands.

But there are a number of diseases in which there is nothing to operate upon, even with a mania for the bistoury. This is where medicine steps in. Now if its methods are numerous, they are not often efficacious. *Multa sed non multum.* After losing itself among the paths of an absurd polypharmacy, which would justify the scepticism of the great Tronchin, it expects to succeed by returning to physical methods, balneotherapy, diet, hygienic measures. Unfortunately, in the evident desire to do right it has not been able to retain the philosophical doubt; it draws conclusions too quickly from a few experiences, theoretical views based upon a knowledge necessarily incomplete, of organic chemistry. Setting up minor truths as dogmas, generalizing too soon, it has created a

code of doctrines which appear as imposing as the front of a fine building. But go inside, start up all this apparatus that ought to make us healthy, and you will see how badly it all works.

Far more; these hopes, often announced to the public to the sound of a trumpet, have developed that continual preoccupation about health which is the disease of the present generation. Prescriptions for diet have especially developed this tendency, and one might say that, for every patient cured by these fanatic practices of diet, there are a hundred driven straight to lesser hypochondria, or perhaps even to greater, which is only a development of the former.

If we except some questions still under discussion, such as abstinence from alcoholic drinks, or a more vegetarian regimen, the question of diet has been about determined upon. Man finds in the most varied food the necessary ration. If it be useful to prescribe a diet for patients suffering from real stomach or intestinal troubles, it is a mistake to make all these nervous, impressionable people lead the life of a valetudinarian,

while their gastro-intestinal troubles are but the consequence of their emotional disturbances. Excessively subject to suggestion, these unfortunates suffer for years, with an angelic patience, the severest restrictions of diet. There are many who become so accustomed to the rôle of everlasting invalids that they scarcely seem to wish to get well. And for all that, it is so easy to bring them back to a normal life, as soon as one shall be able to reveal the pusillanimity towards suffering manifested under what apparently are physical ills, and the absence of judgment that hasty conclusions entail.

Let us avoid falling into this state of hypochondria and let us live in a strength-giving conviction of health. Let us learn, like a cat on broken glass on a wall, to pass through daily worries which will soon cease if we do not prolong them, or which will become light if we do not aggravate them by fear. It is this common "scare" discovered in the greater part of so-called neuropathic states which creates these false gastropathies, so numerous to-day, these invalids suffering from the most diverse phobies, these

beings without temperament who shrink from every task, haunted as they are by the anticipated conviction of their incapacity.

We must make up our minds to be invalids and go to hospitals only in cases of necessity. Talleyrand found the right word when he said one should "fancy one's self well."

XIII

PATIENCE

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PATIENCE

The word "patient" applies to him who actually suffers as well as to him who can bear up under suffering. Now, these two are very different, even opposite persons. He really suffers who is plunged into his suffering, who increases it by avowed grief, who increases it tenfold by apprehensions.

A young man into whom I tried to instil a few principles of stoicism towards ailments stopped me at the first words, saying, "I understand, doctor; let me show you." And taking a pencil he drew a large black spot on a piece of paper. "This," said he, "is the disease, in its most general sense, the physical trouble—rheumatism, toothache, what you will—moral trouble, sadness, discouragement, melancholy. If I acknowledge it by fixing my attention upon it, I already trace a circle to the periphery of the black spot, and it has become larger. If I affirm it with acerbity the spot is increased by a new circle.

There I am, busied with my pain, hunting for means to get rid of it, and the spot only becomes larger. If I preoccupy myself with it, if I fear the consequences, if I see the future gloomily, I have doubled or trebled the original spot." And, showing me the central point of the circle, the trouble reduced to its simplest expression, he said with a smile, "Should I not have done better to leave it as it was?"

"One exaggerates, imagines, anticipates affliction," wrote Seneca. For a long time, I have told my discouraged patients and have repeated to myself, "Do not let us build a second story to our sorrow by being sorry for our sorrow." And one of my patients agreed with me, citing the words of Saint Francis de Sales: "I have seen several persons who, being angry, are afterwards angry for having been angry; resembling circles made by a stone in water, for a little circle makes a larger one and that makes another." We recognise here the example of concentric circles as showing increase in our physical and moral suffering. He who knows how to suffer suffers less. He accepts the trouble

such as it is, without adding to it the terrors that preoccupation and apprehensions produce. Like the animal, he reduces suffering to its simplest expression; he even goes further; he lessens the trouble by thought, he succeeds in forgetting, in no longer feeling it.

What fine color Seneca gave to this thought in his letter LXVIII to Lucilius: "Beware of aggravating your troubles yourself, and of making your position worse by your complaints. Grief is light when not exaggerated by the idea, and if we encourage ourselves, saying, 'it is *nothing,*' or at least, 'it is of small moment; let us endure it, it is about to stop,' we render pain light by thinking it so." Yes; pain becomes light when we are able so to look at it, when we do not draw concentric circles around it, such as my patient ingeniously described; when we do not multiply it by fear.

That fine stoicism does not reign to-day. We abhor suffering and wish to get rid of it at any price. Modern medicine, with its anæsthetics has spoiled us, and we have recourse to these poisons for the smallest operation, as for the drawing of a tooth which

lasts only an instant. We are often punished for it by a disagreeable sequel; some people even pay for their fear with their lives. It would be well to return to a little more roughness towards ourselves, and to reserve these means of lessening suffering for only very painful operations of great length, also for those in which the immobility of the patient is necessary to success. Fear of pain, as much moral as physical, leads many invalids to alcoholism, to morphinomania; but their sensibilities are still more increased under the influence of the poison and end, physically, in an unbelievable hyperæsthesia towards the least disagreeable sensations, as the contact of a cold hand on the skin, and morally, to sensibility to the least vexation, so that the patient seems morally and physically "flayed alive."

It is especially against moral suffering that man rebels, shows himself timid and impatient. This trouble is, in fact, more central; it directly reaches the ego. We endure a state of mental lassitude, of sadness, the siege of melancholy thoughts, with greater difficulty than rheumatic pain. When the very

mind is attacked, the enemy is in the citadel; we find it harder to defend ourselves. Is it impossible? No. Our ego is not single; there is in us a normal division, as it were, of personality. During the course of our whole lives we confer, and are in a continual conversation, with ourselves; people who talk to themselves, asking questions and answering them, are impulsive ones who thus betray their private conversation.

I should say that the power to resist, to lessen pain, so well taught and practised by the Stoics, lies in the isolation of an "inner ego," inaccessible to the suggestions of the outer ego. There is found the method of not allowing suffering to penetrate to the inner ego; it remains untouched like the core of a piece of wood that one might throw into a basin of colouring matter, and of which only the outer layer takes the dye. I have seen many invalids, subject to fits of depression, of moral anguish, able to lessen their suffering by calm reflection and to view with tender melancholy their mental disorders.

It is not a question of escaping pain by making ourselves indifferent to it. The fault

of the Epicureans was to make happiness consist in "the absence of trouble," in "ataraxia." We are wrong to attribute loose habits to the hedonist philosophers, but they were unable to escape a certain egoism. Epicurus renounced marriage so as not to complicate his existence; he found he had enough to do to look after his own peace of mind without becoming responsible for that of others. He forgot that the softening influence of pain, the altruistic tenderness, the feelings of pity and manly valour his educational influence introduced into human relationship, would disappear if stoicism acted upon us like chloroform. In all Christian or philosophical stoicism there is a rock to avoid; it is that of egoistical quietism. We avoid it by substituting for the idea of enervating rest the idea of active life, which exalts courage and makes us find pleasure in the struggle.

Patience towards unavoidable events, depending neither upon us nor upon others, is synonymous with *fatalism;* it is a virtue, and it is the only stand to take in face of the inevitable. Mussulmans have known how to

anchor this beneficent sentiment in their souls better than Christians; they fear death less and accept with gentle resignation the misfortunes they cannot avoid. Sincere Christians should also be able joyously to submit to the decrees of Providence. The idea of necessity is enough for the philosopher. We are all in the same situation towards things as they are, and towards things that we cannot change. The advantage will always lie with him who, for some reason or other, knows how to resign himself tranquilly.

Our impatience is especially shown in our dealings with our fellow men; then we notice absence of the spirit of rest, lack of adaptation to a common life. We suffer daily from the conduct of others, and immediately their acts thwart our needed welfare, they are contrary to our interests and we are ready to attribute malevolent intentions to them and we reciprocate in kind. We give ourselves up to anger, that passion so contrary to the spirit of responsibility, even more disastrous to him who abandons himself to it than to him who is the object of it. Here again the idea of moral determinism is the one to set

us right. Our fellow men act only according to their actual mental representations; most frequently they think they are doing right, and are animated by good intentions. Even when they recognise an immoral character in their acts, when they revenge themselves, and intentionally wish to make trouble, it is because they consider they have reasons for so doing. For example, a man writes an anonymous letter; a friend points out that it is an unworthy act. "Yes," replies the culprit, "I know it; I have not done right, but my enemy has made me suffer so much!" His troubled reason obeys the odious adage: "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"; he is like the child who knows that he must not hurt or strike, and who excuses himself by saying that his adversary began it. How many adults hold this childish point of view all their life! In the presence of people who do harm to us, let us learn to see in their acts the fruit of only the thoughts that their condition of mind permits; and let us avoid being infected by the state of mind which we blame in them; let us stay calm and indulgent—this is not the same as cowardice; it requires

more courage to keep calm than to give one's self up to anger.

Let us turn aside if our adversary rebels at our counsel. If, on the other hand, we believe ourselves able to influence his condition of mind, let us do it gently, by a clear and definite statement of the mutual situation. Above all, let us understand how to recognise our own faults, or, in default of them, understand that acts, legitimate to our eyes, might be interpreted by our adversary in an unfavorable sense; let us not take him strictly to account for this lack of clear-sightedness. We not only irritate ourselves in the face of malevolence, but we also allow ourselves to become impatient, enervated, by others' manner, by their most innocent hobbies, without thinking that we also have some that might give umbrage. We lack patience towards others, even when they are ill; we quickly find their exactions excessive and, when we are sick, we demand minute care without bothering ourselves about the trouble we give.

When somebody wishes to lecture us, in order to induce in us better feelings, we

endure badly this meddling; one must use gloves in order to handle us. On the other hand, when we think it necessary to play the rôle of instructor, we desire to be immediately understood and obeyed; we use a sharp tone in making observations the absolute justice of which we take for granted. We ought to doubt our infallibility a little more, to have more patience in correcting others' minds. Above all, we must prove our aptitude as instructors by trying criticisms on ourselves; we should acquire that command of self, the absence of which we affirm so impatiently in others. We irritate ourselves not only against others, but against ourselves. It would be well if we were satisfied frankly to make the avowal: "What a fool I am!" But we become acrimonious, we fall under scruples, and we thus create a sullen condition of mind, which is a further obstacle to improvement. Like children, we become impatient at not instantly succeeding in our work, instead after failure of beginning anew with more calmness and patience. We not only suffer from the present, but we also revive the past, evoking every sad remembrance in our

minds; we drag the shackles of memory behind us, no matter whether they treat of events independent of our will, over which we ought to have quickly drawn the sponge of forgetfulness, or whether we entertain eternal and vain regret for faults committed.

Regret is the memory of past pain, with the feeling that it might have been avoided if we had been more careful. But of what use is this paralyzing regret when we evoke the past? There is only one point to retain in that memory—a presentment of the mistake made in such a way as to avoid it in future.

Regret seizes us when we have neglected to take precautions, and so have acted precipitately or in an inconsiderate fashion. It becomes remorse when we have transgressed the ethical laws, of which we made an ideal. It is then a question rather of greater interests than of simple forgetfulness or clumsiness. The intensity of remorse depends upon our morality—that is to say, our attachment to virtue—there is treason in want of fidelity to our ideal; we blame ourselves for it as for evil feelings towards those whom we love. We should dare to say that he who has no

remorse is more excusable, the moral barriers not existing in him; he is unconscious of the harm he does. Moral culture, on the contrary, renders the soul ever more sensitive, and each infraction is punished by inner suffering; it is the penalty of our personal responsibility to acknowledge our faults in salutary contrition. But this should not lead us to remain in an unhappy state of mind which is as painful to those near us as to ourselves. Remorse is the sheep-dog biting the strayed sheep; he must not continue to bite when the sheep has returned to the flock and only wishes to do right.

We conceive eternal remorse in crime; the culprit will suffer more severely as he recognises the extent of his fault—a strange contradiction at first sight, but the punishment is as much the greater as the soul is more delicate; it spares the immoral person, however. On the other hand, repentance has its sweetness and pushes us more urgently towards the dreamed-of ideal.

In our lives, in which regret is more frequent than remorse, let us avoid prolonging moral suffering when it paralyzes our efforts

towards the good. It is well to feel the full measure of the blame we receive, to lessen in no way contrition; let it have its full force and quickly, even if it bow us to the ground; but let us immediately think of rising again, which is only possible in a courageous disposition. Like the rubber ball that has touched ground, we should rebound. From the moment we recognise our fault, we enter a rapidly descending arc of discouragement. Arrived at the bottom, we rise in an ascending arc of brave resolution, and we set ourselves to repair our work with growing joy.

The necessity of cutting short vain remorse, or, rather, of using it to raise one's self, is not present in the minds of most people, and we see unfortunates—we also class them in the already overfull category of neurasthenics—who pass their lives bent beneath regret for the past. But how quickly they understand when their noble contrition has been approved of as a means for bringing them back to the right road! They immediately see they can only enter it by raising the head, by joyfully walking towards the goal, by perfecting their minds.

It is patience, untiring patience, that is needed to endure from day to day everything that life brings us—the vexations, the misfortunes, the sickness, the moral suffering. The last named is so much the more bitter as it is created by our own mistakes. Like a pilot amid reefs and storm, we must preserve the coolness that alone can save us—ourselves and those in our charge. To know how to suffer is the first condition of courageous patience.

XIV

COURAGE

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COURAGE

Alphonse Daudet, it is said, once gave a ring to one of his sons with this inscription on it, "*Memento Vivere.*" That is the motto of a valiant optimism. Pessimists will think it is unnecessary to remind us that we must live, since the burden of existence already appears only too present and heavy to them.

To submit to life whiningly is not living. Life should be made active and joyous. It is so short that it is a pity to lose even a few moments of it in sadness, that is painful to ourselves and disagreeable to others. By thus giving ourselves up to depression we squander the little capital of happiness which we might retain in this world. Of melancholy it would be better to say with Montaigne, "Of all men I am the most exempt from this passion, neither liking nor esteeming it."

That everybody has not a well-balanced mind is true, and many persons whose life is

hard would find cruel irony in any encouragement to take life gaily. The joy of living is, in truth, not to be found if we seek it in events. The most privileged will find in their existence only a few brief periods of easy happiness that were brought about by circumstances, a kind of happiness that is accessible only to the young, at an age when strength, health, and youthful recklessness united are helped onward by success in a chosen career. How many unfortunate ones have been obliged from the start to renounce all this satisfaction!

From hereditary influence, atavism, and often through the parents' faults, by unfavourable hygienic conditions, many children acquire disease in their cradles and will never enjoy that precious blessing, physical health. More ill-favoured still are those to whom nature has given a sorrowful disposition, "afflicted souls" who can react only the wrong way: in the sense of sadness, their nerves relaxing under the pressure of the brutalities of existence.

A visit to a children's hospital displays to the eyes a horrible physiological misery,

which is the more revolting because the sufferers are innocent; one foresees all the severity of their future, although they themselves often do not seem to think about it. Still, even there, in this place of suffering, we feel the angel of courage hovering near, of joyous resignation, as evoked by those who bind up wounds and give new ardour to bruised hearts. There is more sweetness in this atmosphere than in the noisy gaiety of a crowd of happy school children. There is fine endurance in the midst of this misery; but there is the hope of lessening it by public and private hygiene, by all the works of human responsibility that should always hold a large place in our preoccupations.

Disease of the mind is more rarely observed at an age naturally given to gaiety and upon which responsibilities do not yet fall. But from adolescence we see psychical suffering appear, that state of mind to-day called neurasthenic and in which indecision, scruples, lack of self-confidence dominate, that fear of life which induces a lamentable inaptitude to enjoy a little happiness and causes the desire for suicide, even among children.

One sees little girls who, already haunted by fear of disease and death, are unable to abandon themselves for an instant to innocent childish joys. These martyrs to heredity and improper education are innumerable. The world does not understand them; it ill treats them. There is no white and clean hospital cot, no tender nurse's face, no physician with firm kindness, for these unfortunates whose souls are suffering and who have need both of sympathy and help. We do not know where to put them. The insane asylum, which would seem to be the place, would be a jail to them; the family, which should be the refuge, is the very place where the evil was created, not only by way of psychopathic heredity, but further by education and mental contagion. Most frequently parents do not recognise the mental likeness and, equally diseased in mind with their offspring, they accuse them of their own shame.

In this subject of man "marvellously vain, diverse, and undulating," we discover surprising contradictions. He who is intelligent in his studies totally lacks that moral clear-sightedness which determines conduct, and

so ruins his life by his vagaries. Some young girl who gives herself to altruistic work and lives in the spirit of sincere religion struggles unsuccessfully against a native egoism, so contradictory to her devotion that we have been obliged to invent a word for "egotism" and speak of "egocentric" dispositions, so as not to wound the patient's susceptibilities.

The disease is not incurable. One should see these anxious faces brighten from the result of patient, indulgent, and encouraging orthopædia in order to realize the beauty of a "medicine of the mind" directly emanating from rational ethics.

The doctor's office should become a psychopathic dispensary, where prescriptions are not distributed, but where, without taking into account the patient's condition of mind, one sows all those seeds of stoic courage, motives of reason, not cold but calm, which alone can correct the defects of our innate and acquired mentality.

What can we say to those still more numerous unfortunates who have physical health, intellectual gifts, and especially happy

circumstances, who go astray because they have not been brought up to develop the moral life? They must see that they have not the same right to complain as the disinherited; they must find in themselves strength against evil tendencies, not as a visionary wish, but by that sharp moral view which meditative thought develops. I do not blame them for their ethical deficiencies; these force-ideas have not been inculcated in them by others; they have not felt the strong charm of self-education; they have not seen "the meaning of it"; we must teach it to them. When they suffer and perceive that they are going wrong, the time has come to raise them up, to show them the absolute necessity of courage, to incite this courage by showing them the precious harvest they will gather; that is to say, happiness.

Discouragement is always bad; it aggravates every situation; we can excuse it, but we cannot approve it. It is not enough to recognise this logical truth; we must hammer it into our heads in order that it may become a feeling to which we can give life-like expression.

I have the habit of telling patients: "Discouragement is a beverage both poisoned and bitter—two powerful reasons for not touching it." Does this mean that we succeed in always being sustained by this fact? No; not a day passes that we do not suffer discouragement, a lowering of the moral barometer; but it should not be allowed to last. As soon as we give ourselves up to it, we perceive the bitterness, and immediately we think of its toxic qualities.

The idea that discouragement is a poison should play the part of a directing cushion in the game of our understanding. Like the billiard-ball thrown on to a plane surface and which has not yet reached the elastic cushion, discouragement breaks in upon our mind and continues its course; but immediately it strikes the obstacle, which is the moral idea, it deviates and our mental representations become orderly.

We should ever and always awaken the idea of courage in our minds, light up the torch that guides us. The force-idea must settle in the depths of our soul, and be ready at the given moment to let loose our energies.

That is what the ancient philosophers so well understood; they saw in reason, in a prudent dialectic addressed to one's self, the remedy for moral decay.

According to the mind, this settlement of ethical principles requires more or less time. Ideas transmitted to us resemble fine sand thrown upon the surface of the water; it floats a few moments, then sinks more or less slowly according to whether salt or fresh water and forms a bed at the bottom. Ideas are like it. However simple they may be—and could one imagine a clearer one than the uselessness, the harmfulness of discouragement? —they remain a long time at the surface of our understanding. It is only with time that they sink and form that thick deposit which constitutes our conscience, our moral personality. Then only does the idea-feeling act upon us and give us a force we did not suppose we possessed. It is the same with the growth of religious ideas; many people acknowledge and defend them with a violence hardly Christian; such ideas often have not lived long enough, have not been completely enough thought out, to produce virtuous acts.

It is not enough to fight discouragement; we must have that kind of courage which difficulties stir up; like a race-horse before a hurdle, the higher the obstacle the more eagerness we must show in leaping it.

One day a neurasthenic young countryman was telling me his troubles, pointing out new vexations, and playing the part of the last drop that overflows the vase. To settle his ideas, I made a comparison, saying, "You are in the gymnasium class; the master makes you jump a rope two feet from the ground. You have some difficulty in jumping over it; he now raises it to two feet five inches. "What is to be done?" "Take more spring," he answered without hesitation.

Exactly, as difficulties increase, we must take more spring, otherwise if the bar is raised and courage lowered, failure is certain. It is not easy always to preserve this imperturbable courage. With deep compassion we should forgive those hours of moral lassitude suffered by unfortunates who lack health, and a certain freedom, who have found on this road neither encouraging sympathy nor persistent help, and who fight

against their lot with a constancy that appears unattainable by the strong. When reprimanding them we must not shake them roughly; that would be cruelty. Complete sympathy alone, born of the feeling that we might not have done better ourselves, will be the means by which we can infuse into them a little of that warm blood which creates buoyancy.

Reflections of this nature always produce some courage and end by influencing diseased minds. I have seen months pass without this philosophy being able to influence the patient's mind, and yet the day arrives when the spring, slowly stretched, has acquired sufficient force.

Courage is often born from excess of discouragement—from the very suffering, persistent and growing, that it creates. Like the naturally timid animal which finds itself cornered, we turn about and face the difficulties. It is partly owing to the urgent character of necessity that we are able to retain courage in the great events of life, but we let it crumble away in the midst of numerous small annoyances each day.

"I recognise," said an intelligent woman to me, "the entire wisdom of your views; I see clearly the necessity for repressing my emotions, for suppressing fear; but when something happens to upset me, reason, that ought to save one, only comes five minutes after, which is too late." That happens to us all. It is the same with sentimental dialectics as with fencing; for a long time our parry comes only after our adversary's button has touched us. Little by little, by exercise, our defence becomes smarter, and one day we succeed in turning the point before it touches us. Let us exercise ourselves in moral defence, and we shall avoid defeat.

Many people experience another form of contradiction in themselves; they know very well how to advise others on how to raise their courage, but are unable to overcome their own weaknesses. Is not this because, in the struggle for our own interests, there is an emotional element which somewhat troubles our judgment and makes us undecided? The man who might give his neighbour good advice about investments might not always experience the same ease of

prompt and sure judgment when it became a question of his own business. This is because it affects his own welfare.

On the contrary, others, perhaps more altruistic in emergency, fear rather to counsel their fellow men than to act for themselves, and courageous almost without effort, they dare not incite this virtue in others. What a disconcerting being is a man in his continual changes of mind, which seem to result as much from internal physical causes, or from relaxation of mental nerves, as from moral causes, or associations of discouraging ideas!

The individual who without anxiety understands and observes the hypochondriac, distinguishes continual squalls in the inner personality, inequalities of humour, which persist even if he is able to hide them from the eyes of others and does not let them appear in acts. Clouds obscure our moral sky, without our being able to recognise the reason for the change of weather. Many people, especially when they are tired, feel their minds vacillate like a barometer during changeable weather. The slightest annoying event, failure in things of the least importance, imme-

diately unrolls a veil of sadness, which is sufficient to make them say apropos of some trifle that life is not worth living. Fortunately these impressionable natures are as easy to reanimate as to depress, a ray of sunshine is enough; a good word or a joke, sometimes a cup of coffee, or a cigar in the smoke of which the sufferer evokes the image of that careless flexibility which helps us to pass through the difficulties of life.

Let us always keep up this smiling courage; it should not be a fierce and bitter stoicism, but a simple valour like that of gentlemen of the old time who skilfully handled the light sword. This warlike disposition must begin in the morning; we must make our moral toilet and clothe ourselves in its coat of mail. We can then say: "Whatever the day may bring, of physical fatigue, intellectual work, or moral emotions, I am ready; my method enables me to be so, and there is still something left over."

Another thought often comes to my mind, when I feel the beginning of weakness in the face of a task, to go forward cheerily, play martial music and make the steps lively.

XV

CHASTITY

XV

CHASTITY

In writing this word chastity, so rarely penned that it has an archaic air, I seem to hear on every tongue the formidable hoots of men, and mingled with them the rippling laugh of coquettes; I see the discreet but yet mocking smile of many honest women; I detect also the sobs of those who have seen their dreams of happiness crumble away.

When recently at Paris some clever men—Catholics, Protestants, and freethinkers—united to work in common for the improvement of morality, they were hissed and spat upon—by the common people, should you say? No; by the élite of the youth, by university scholars, and scholars of the École des Beaux-Arts!

Why this quasi-unanimity of revolt when one dares to recommend self-control in this domain? Because, we are told, one must not dare interfere with the right of man to love! Is it not a natural law, a primordial, ineffaceable instinct?

Far be it from me to condemn love, even when it is reduced to the merest animal sensuality. I should not care to make man a mental eunuch, avoiding by continual asceticism the slavery of passion. I understand chastity to mean, according to the dictionary: "abstention from illicit pleasures, and reasonable control in pleasures allowed." I do not speak here of that complete and definite abstinence which is unnatural, and which made that unbalanced but witty queen, Christina of Sweden, say, "Too many men take vows of chastity to keep them." This does not mean that this supreme virtue should not be accessible to spiritual souls, if circumstances demanded it.

Sexual love is neither pure nor impure; it is natural; it is neither beautiful nor ugly; it is instinct, and one of the mistakes of Christian Puritanism is to have considered the act to which we owe our birth as low and even shameful. That horror of the nude that would clothe such beautiful bodies as those of Michelangelo in "The Last Judgment" is puerile; and so is it to proscribe madonnas who give the breast to the divine bambino,

and stupidity to cover the antique nudes with fig-leaves.

No, the healthy human body is beautiful; its instincts are not "the terrible yoke of animality," as theologians call it, but the blossoming of that joy of living, animal and healthy, which is at the source of our energy. By a false spiritualism we force ourselves not to see the influence that amorous passion has upon the mind; it seems as if we were ashamed of it; others realize very clearly the slavery in which they live. The Pharisee still constitutes the virtuous man in society. Judging from appearances, one might think humanity were all asexual.

From the natural point of view, it is free love that has prior right to existence, that love lighted by physical charms, coarse in its unconscious egoism, even fickle—for uniformity is the enemy of pleasure—that love which the brothers Margueritte paint so well in the lascivious phrase "those delightful occasions when the woman, bird of passage, after the final billing and cooing, spreads her wings and flies away." Yes—I see nothing but what is pleasant and gracious in this pic-

ture; but still it is animal love in all its organic spontaneity. Is that the human ideal? No.

Although, with slightly infantile pride, man puts himself on the border of the animal world, where he consents to be for naturalists nothing but the first animal above the gorilla, in the order of primates, he has bestowed upon himself the title of *Homo Sapiens*, and he should live up to it. Love is no longer the result of a simple organic impulsion to him; he does not experience an authoritative and periodical requirement, bringing male and female together for the purpose of procreation; he depends much more on imagination, on mental representations, always accessible to education.

Man lowers himself beneath the brute when he gives himself up to libidinous thoughts; on the contrary, he raises himself by ethical thought to a more beautiful conception of love when he puts feelings of real affection first, and when the union of souls completes the bodily union.

Life lived in common imposes upon us, not constraint, but a precious gift for others and

for ourselves, duties that restrict our impulses of passion. Man assumes towards his mate, and towards the beings born of their union, responsibilities which increase only according as physical and moral needs develop.

In the savage, the care of offspring can be reduced, as in the animal, to the instinct of race preservation, to the protection of the newly born, to their physical development until they are able to shift for themselves. There is little difference between these primitive societies and the rabbit-warren; the woman is not yet the companion; she is only an instrument of pleasure and a beast of burden.

But this physical life does not satisfy us who are civilized; we live an intellectual and moral life; we are quivering with feelings foreign to the animal mind. Love does not bind us by chains of capricious love alone, by the attraction of reciprocal sexual rank; it awakens sentiments of sympathy resulting from the community of intellectual and moral aspirations; it tempers the impulse of passion with respect. It is a complete union of intimate

life that the engagement begins and which marriage should continue, an entire work of moral development, not only in the narrow path of family egoism, but in a wide spirit of social responsibility. A family is created and new duties spring up, tightening the conjugal bond and rendering the co-operation of the parents still more necessary in the pursuit of the general welfare. We not only owe our children their daily bread, care that assures their physical and intellectual development, but we have to leave them an equally precious heritage in that stock of moral ideas called conscience, and those governing principles that will direct them on the right way. To consider the results of the act of love, that chain of duties both serious and sweet which we have to fulfil, is enough to make us feel that human love can only find satisfaction in monogamous marriage, following a chaste youth exempt from a libertinism that would compromise the ethical goal.

I know how the idea of chastity in youth makes men smile—even those whom we call serious. Are we not always saying that woman is monogamous but that man is polyg-

amous? We seem to admit a natural law in this troubling discord. Marcel Prevost one day asked the question if there were really husbands who had never had "experience."

It is true there are reasons for this contrast. Love is a woman's life-work; she does not offer herself, she gives herself with a natural modesty which sentiments of reciprocal sympathy, the community of family duties, alone can reclaim; she is more mother than wife and accepts with admirable stoicism her heavy duties.

Man is naturally a greater egoist; his part is more fleeting. The sensual impulse that urges him to indulgence is more absolute; he has not originally at heart that native modesty which moderates the transport of the senses. Busy elsewhere facing life, he develops qualities of energy slightly militant, which increases his natural egoism.

These temperamental differences between masculine and feminine are found in animal life, and it would be unjust to reproach man with this roughness and impulsiveness which make virtue more difficult for him. Let us also take into consideration the ever-present

contagion of vice found outside the family circle, and we shall no longer attempt to put boys and girls on the same footing, to demand the same sweetness and modesty in men that we love to see in women; if men possessed these qualities they would have the effeminate air of an Apollo Musagetes.

I know very well that it would be fallacious to demand chastity among those who daily experience the temptation to vice in the deleterious agglomeration of military life, and in wanderers of every profession who must so often renounce conjugal life. The state of mind of this multitude is not favourable to moral culture and so prostitution, as old as the world, will remain like a stain, to mark our powerlessness to create a healthy and harmonious life for all. I am no more astonished at this moral disorder than at the existence of alcoholism, and do not lull myself to sleep with the hope of seeing these scourges of humanity soon disappear.

What astounds me, what revolts me, is to see the complacency with which the upper classes, who should be protected by intellectual culture, regard libertinism.

That in the theatrical world and among our popular writers it is the exception to find willing chastity, which has resulted, not from natural coldness but from ethical thought, scarcely surprises me, remembering the surrounding contagion. But what shall we say of those literary and artistic critics who charm us by the cleverness of their psychological observations, their keenness of moral vision and of whose hidden amours and habits of low sensuality we some day hear? And those poets, who know so well how to sing of love, and who impose upon us by covering their vulgar eroticism with a veil of beautiful verse! Often, however, they have suffered, and their plaints should instruct us. But we forget these trifles and remark that Rolla did at twenty what his fathers before him had done.

Why are works from the imagination of our best writers, those incomparable sculptors of phrases, spoiled by the heartrending vulgarity of the subject as soon as love is in question? Why that obscenity which during dinners and over cigars makes men so often resemble lascivious monkeys?

There are moralist physicians who call hygiene to their aid in the fight against vice; evidently this is better than to encourage debauchery under the pretext of hygiene. Secure in their science, they show young men the risks they run, those various venereal diseases that they complacently describe. The Germans call that "Nailing the devil to the wall."

A poor moral indeed—that of fear, even if it were efficacious. It is not, and in spite of warnings the number of "damaged" does not diminish. Men continue to expose themselves to these dangers, to impair, often for life, their physical and mental health; they do not hesitate for a vulgar satisfaction of their passions to run the risk of transmitting their taint to the wife they have chosen, to the children they beget. That is the sad spectacle which not only the miserable and alcoholic poor give us, but the aristocracy, the good middle class—those governing classes that feel called upon to defend social order.

Doubtless hygienic considerations may play a part in the prevention of vice; but rational chastity should be founded upon higher and

purer views, upon the sentiment of human responsibility. We must avoid evil not only because it is dangerous for us, but because it is evil. And what harm is there in that love of which I have just recognised so frankly the natural, legitimate character? It is that by seeking love outside of marriage we despoil it in a blow of its ethical base, of those sentiments of altruism which mitigate its character as fundamentally egoistical. Conjugal love rests, as on a tripod, upon sexual attraction, intellectual union, and the community of moral aspirations. If this triple agreement cannot always exist at the beginning, it should be created to assure the welfare of husband and wife. Despoiled of its spiritual elements, reduced to sexual appetite, love debases us below the beasts; it then becomes so gross that a man of taste ought to turn away from it, even when his senses are already inflamed.

The life of gallantry is not without forfeiture, without a weakening of the altruistic sentiments that are at the base of all morality. One must have lost respect for human personality and kindness to enjoy shame-

lessly facilities for regulated and clandestine prostitution, to consider woman only as an instrument of pleasure, to demand caresses from her without giving her affection. "Love nowhere and the spectre of love everywhere."

Mozart, when in the midst of the temptations of theatrical life, wrote that the fearful thought that a man might turn a woman from the straight road should be sufficient to protect her. That should be the condition of mind of our morally cultivated young men, the only one that can give the strength to resist the temptations of passion. And do not make the objection that this respect is due only to the woman who is called immaculate, that Mozart only condemned by his fine words that seduction which is disapproved of, at least according to them, by numbers of rakes. The commonest of prostitutes has a right to our kindness; her very misery especially recommends her to our benevolence. Responsibility in vice is not divided; it is entire for both principals. We should feel intuitively that we ought not to outrage a workman's daughter, or a girl belonging to

the lower middle class, any more than we should like the same thing to happen to our sister or to our daughter.

Sincere religious feelings should suffice to make this chastity possible, and even easy, and to oppose an unshakable barrier to vice; but alas, it is in this domain that we observe the superficial character of so much piety, which is pasteboard religion, and widespread; which often goes hand in hand with libertinism. Profession of faith is not enough, nor are cultivated habits due to surroundings. Self-control is acquired only by constant reflection; it rests upon a clear view of moral determinism, which, by making men equal, creates true humility. This control demands indulgence for others linked to severity towards self, courage in the struggle against the passions, and moderation even in the legitimate pleasures to which we may be led.

It is in the domain of sexual morality that the most gifted man feels the necessity for moral effort in the midst of what I have defined as the painful indecision of weighted scales. There is in one tray an enormous

weight of native and legitimate sensuality; in the other, the weight, often variable, of moral principles. While the impulse of passion always remains powerful, rational motives seem to constitute a volatile substance. Among most men it weighs so little that the scales drop heavily to the bad side; among others it oscillates, now to this side, now to that. He alone who has founded his morality upon an ideal cuts short these hesitations and resists victoriously.

Nowadays marriage is again attacked. According to Paul Margueritte, a change is about to be made; that is to say, we are on the eve of a revolution in this domain. I think rather that no change will come about through many methods now extolled. Easy divorce will not save us. Doubtless it may break the yoke that many people have hung about their necks, often from lack of clear sight and self-control. This may be a blessing; for there is no real power in the legal consecration of a rupture that has already been consummated. Frequency of separations could at the best only encourage carelessness in the formation of the marriage bond. Free

love, even in the generous conception of an Ellen Key, will not give greater strength and consequent happiness.

Finally, the very modern Léon Blum, observing the continual infractions of morality, ingeniously avoids the offence by abolishing the law. Henceforth young men and young girls—for the author is *feminist*—are to sow their wild oats in early life for as long as they like, and are only to marry when ripe—I was going to say "mellow"—for conjugal life.

These dreams will not facilitate virtue. That is possible only in constant respect towards an ideal influencing our minds by the force of truth, which itself constitutes one of the strongest moral barriers to sexual immorality. The youth who, in the veiled suggestion of his surroundings, is about to lose his chastity finds himself in a dilemma sufficient to restrain a noble mind. He can, in a commonplace cynicism, admit or let his faults be supposed; most frequently he knows that he will cause sorrow to his parents and will destroy the ties of sympathy that unite him to loved and respected persons. At an age

when his reason should develop, his enthusiasm for the beautiful, and his superiority as a man, he shows on the contrary a most vulgar passivity towards the contagion of vice. It becomes a willing moral downfall at the beginning of virility. On the other side, he has—I cannot say to what extent—the resource of dissimulation. He must be content to wear a mask—this proud young man who holds his head so high and affects frankness with other men! He deceives women, those whom he makes use of for pleasure, she whom he is going to marry; and whom he wants intact, but not too chaste; that would upset old habits. He falls from the clouds, this distinguished, intelligent young man, when one dares to speak of expected fidelity towards a future wife; he, who claims to be spiritual, who, if you please, declares himself to be profoundly religious, intrenches himself behind material necessities. He is vicious only for hygienic reasons; physicians have pointed out to him from the age of seventeen the dangers of continence; it appears to him that virtue produces neurasthenia.

Are we not also told that one must have sowed wild oats in order to make a model husband; gaining the wisdom of experience, we settle down in time, and we are able to give our sons good advice, not to make fools of themselves, and, above all, how to avoid the consequences. One must know life. A German woman wrote this cruel line: "There are many men who do not know their wives, and it is a pity; there are many women who do not know their husbands, and it is not a pity." She forgot that the fair sex has also its weaknesses and that husbands sometimes make strange discoveries.

There is a continence—I do not call it chastity—which has no moral value; it is in the first place that of the impotent, those of cold temperaments, the timid, the undecided, who are bitten with desire and restrained, not by moral feelings, but by fear, dread of contagion, of scandal, of "what will they say," by religious scruples without force because they are the result of passive suggestions. A true chastity can be founded only upon clear views, upon moral notions thoroughly examined and which one has learned to love.

Past morality is never a guarantee for future morality. There are men who are chaste till marriage and who cut up pranks afterwards. Sometimes they have the excuse not that their wives are chaste, but that they are frigid; certain women do not distinguish between a virtue and an infirmity. The downfalls of the chaste are carefully noted by those who have not been so; they confirm the idea that chastity is impossible, and it is so pleasant to catch one's neighbour tripping. Mental deformations due to senility sometimes explain these errors; they can make out of a chaste adult an old satyr and out of a fine matron, formerly frigid, a Messalina with gray hair. The path of sexual morality is bordered with slippery edges, and in order not to fall over we have need for all the moral strength that ethical reason can give us.

We much need that virtue. Debauchery that is painted in pleasant colours carries with it many other vices—contempt for human personality, disloyalty, and hardness. On the contrary, chastity is founded on kindness itself. It creates altruistic sentiments, and its

practise strengthens more and more the ethical idea that engendered it; thus Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was able to say, "Chastity is the source of strength and of moral beauty in both sexes."

XVI

SINCERITY

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SINCERITY

How UGLY defects become when we see them from the outside in others: There is one that seems especially hateful; it is insincerity. Nothing is so painful as to be deceived, betrayed; nothing troubles social relations like a lie. We all know it, and yet how rare it is to meet with sincerity! It appears as a nudity, indecent to exhibit in society; we consider ourselves authorized to dissimulate our thought as we hide our little deformities by the art of the toilette; a natural complexion offends a community in which every one paints. Still a kiss would be sweeter on a cheek from which the color did not come off. Human relations would be quite different if we showed sincerity by our actions.

This virtue should please men, because it means courage, which they pride themselves on possessing. One often needs it in order to express frankly a thought that one has matured, to do it without fear of conflicting with

that of others, to have, as we say, the courage of our opinion. How cowardly men are upon this point! One sees believers putting their banners in their pockets when they are exposed to the quibbles of non-thinkers; even priest-haters are seen to go devotedly to mass when they have some interest in doing so. There are young debauchees who are careful not to reform, but to preserve a saintly reputation, and there are chaste persons who ape the follies of vice and satisfy imaginary indulgences so as to appear like everybody else. It is the fear of "what will they say" that agitates these marionettes.

One day we surprise a politician in a fine action; we say there is a man who has courage, who says what he wishes. Alas, the action did not correspond to the feeling; we learn later that he acted from quite different motives and that he considers those persons simple who believed him sincere. It is so well admitted that we must use cunning in politics that a statesman once said: "We also have sometimes our moments of sincerity." We are very afraid of appearing simple in this world; we wish to pass for clever, with-

out thinking that the habit is often nothing but lying and malevolence.

It is pride, and the most vulgar sort, that makes us suffer when we have been deceived. We should then experience only one sorrow, that of having seen another go morally astray and show a low sentiment. Generally a man feels only vexation in having been "caught" and, following his infantile logic, he gets ready to render evil for evil.

If we meet with so little sincerity in this world, it is because it is put to flight as soon as it tries to show itself. We approach others with suspicion in mind, and we put ourselves on guard as if we were going to battle; we make our interlocutor an adversary; it is natural that he should be on the defensive.

The best method of creating a quality in a man is to suppose he possesses it! By believing in his sincerity from the start, we shall compel him to be sincere. I have often noticed that people who are true themselves have rarely to complain of others; they are frank; they meet with frankness; with those who can dissimulate, we go more carefully —"to the cheat, a cheat and a half."

Education in sincerity and veracity is still deficient. We do not have a sufficiently high ideal of this virtue. There are many people who are honest enough not to lie for vulgar material ends, but who abandon themselves to lying for fear of being wrongly judged by others and exposed to their mockery. When we have once failed in sincerity, we run a great risk of continuing in that path, so loath are we to admit our first fault. Rousseau, after having indignantly calumniated his servant Marion, by accusing him of the theft of a ribbon that he had intrusted to him, would have liked to obey his impulse of penitence, but he could not. "I feared little the punishment," he wrote; "I feared only the shame; that I fear more than death, more than everything." Yes, this pride can lead even to crime, this fear of being exposed to criticism.

"Sincerity is the first of virtues," said Victor Cherbuliez; and once a professor of philosophy, M. Parodi, in an address at the distribution of prizes of the Lycée Corneille, showed that sincerity might constitute the sole basis of rational morality. "The respect

of truth," said he, "is the virtue of adult humanity. As it becomes conscious of itself, sincerity acquires to our eyes growing importance."

Sincerity is, in truth, an adult virtue. The lie is the arm of the weak; the child uses it spontaneously when he thinks he can avoid trouble by it; woman, who reasons less than man, falls into the way of it more easily. Men themselves, so presumptuous, do not always understand all the strength and beauty of frankness; in dispensing it to others, they blend it with roughness and carelessness. The child may be early trained to this virtue, without the trouble of teaching; it is by the contagion of example that it is inculcated. We should therefore be sincere with him, say nothing to him we do not think, do nothing in his presence that detracts from the principle of sincerity.

The sentiment that we should fix in our hearts is a constant respect for truth. In every circumstance, even of our most private life; in our intentions even, we should act and think as if others saw us, without having to blush.

I am surprised that a moralist like Jules Payot[1] should not always see the beauty of sincerity, and has dared to recommend the use of the lie when it can benefit us without hurting others. According to him, a student who desires to work can invent a lie in order to get rid of comrades who wish to carry him off to a tavern or for a walk. Isn't it simpler to say that one desires to work, and does it need heroism to resist such allurements? Such a feeble character would inspire me with slight confidence, and I ask myself if a man who deforms truth so easily, when the most trivial interests are involved, can suddenly become sincere when more important interests are at stake. One can imagine dramatic situations in which a lie might protect our lives or those of others. Those are abnormal situations, analogous to a state of war; moral laws already suffer a strain in the case of legitimate defence, which authorizes recourse to violence, that is immoral in itself. In great captains, we make a virtue of their cunning as

[1] "L'Éducation de la Volonté," par Jules Payot. Paris, thirtieth edition, 1909. A translation of this work by Smith Ely Jelliffe was published in 1909 by Funk & Wagnalls Company.

we praise their valour. We can argue upon opportunities for forced lies, and each one has the right to act according to his conscience if he finds himself placed in a situation he can get out of only by dissimulation. But we rarely encounter such dilemmas in life. We like sincerity in others, we suffer from their disloyalty, but we do not preserve sufficiently intact our aversion to the lie.

The life of society encourages this lack of frankness; it authorizes a quantity of little lies that often are very useless, since we guess what is being kept from us, as when we hear that monsieur is absent, instead of that monsieur does not receive. And yet the latter would be equally easy to say and to maintain if one had really good reasons for it. Doubtless these stereotyped lies rarely harm any one, but they already impair the spirit of truth; they create unfortunate mental habits, which are hard to get rid of when more serious circumstances render frankness desirable.

Frankness is not a show quality, one of those worldly half-virtues which, like politeness, simply helps relations between men. On

the contrary, it is a cardinal virtue engendering many others. When one is frank, one can no longer do evil except by mistake; one would be exposed to the justifiable reproaches of others, and of one's self, as soon as the wrong was recognised.

Frankness creates loyalty in business, commercial probity. In countries where it is lacking, we not only experience the annoyance of being deceived, but we suffer morally in observing such a want of morality. In communities that consider themselves more highly cultured, we see, if not the lie direct, at least dissimulation, so much the easier as the interests in question are more considerable. Absence of frankness is tolerated in certain circles of high finance, and among promoters of business; for a long time we have admitted that little thieves are hanged and big ones let go.

We meet with disloyal conduct in the industrial world, where adulteration and substitution exist, and benefits that should accrue to inventors and pioneers are unscrupulously appropriated. Quite a collection of laws are needed to protect men against their kind, so

greatly ignored is the social compact that binds them together.

The ideal purpose pursued by science should aid savants in the practice of frankness. Alas, vanity in them takes the place of the appetite for gain! Plagiarists are not rare, and there is little sincerity in the quarrel that questions of priority give birth to; everywhere egoism raises its head and helps us to forget the ideal of truth.

We are not always sincere even in the exposition of our opinions in discussions in which no interest is in question, except that ever-recurrent one of our vanity. To make a good appearance is our great preoccupation, and it is enough to make us strain the truth.

As I have said, it is in questions of love that the effects of disloyalty are most cruelly felt. Man does not see how egotistical, in its natural order, is his desire for the other sex. He calls it by the same name as affection, as altruism, and he does not perceive that to justify this analogy he must introduce sentiments of benevolence and charity into his passion.

In this domain especially, frankness would

be a powerful element of morality. The young man brought up to speak the truth would not give himself up to vulgar debauchery, to adventures of gallantry; he would revolt at wearing the mask this fast life requires. If he found himself carried away by sensual impulses, he would retreat in alarm at the thought of the state of mind that would result from continual dissimulation. It is not vulgar fear and timidity that restrain him; it is the impossibility of renouncing, when he becomes a man, the ideal of frankness that he formed when a youth, that education has inculcated.

Attracted by the charms of a young girl, he will see at a glance the path that frankness offers. He will not only shun seduction —I hold him incapable of it—but also that "flirting" which might awaken hopes in her who pleases him, might compromise her, and leave her the bitterness of disillusion. So long as he is not in a position to support a family, he is careful not to awaken passion in another, and smothers his own. By work, he will try to arrive at a settled position that will allow him love, and when he thinks of

that future, it is not lasciviousness that awakens in him; it is a dream of happiness to which he gives himself up; he wishes to be joined to her whom he loves, live with her in a community of thought, of noble aspirations.

In marriage, he is shielded against infidelity; not that he becomes insensible to the attraction of other women—there is allurement in sensuality that we can not repulse at will—but because he truly loves and is unable to cause unhappiness. He is incapable of dissimulation in worldly relations; and why shall he lose that frankness in the close bond of marriage?

The young man who follows this straight path gives no proof of heroic renouncement. It is only a struggle at the beginning, at the age when passion bursts forth. Soon moral ideas, for the moment disturbed, will reassert and strengthen themselves. They will ever become clearer for those who think; they will constitute solid dykes against which the waves of passion will break themselves.

Frankness is also the best support in the fight against secret vice, so common among

children, above all among boys, and which risks playing the part of derivative to amorous passion. If there were not theorists about this vice, and if we did not find to-day apologists for a still more shameful vice, I might have dispensed with this little digression. Immorality, it is true, has the most grievous consequences when our acts compromise the material and moral interests of others; in fact, for Robinson Crusoe on his island there was no social morality. But as man raises himself by thought, he recognises the necessity for continual self-control.

As is seen, sincerity is not a common virtue; it is not found in the streets. Still it is the most necessary of all virtues because no other can exist without it.

XVII

KINDNESS

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KINDNESS

The child is born predisposed to good-will towards others; he is prodigal of caresses to men, to animals, and even to inanimate things. But this kindness is only a form of sensuality; its exacts reciprocity, or at least submission. The child becomes angry when toys or household pets, companions in his play, do not appear to obey his wishes. Then, as in purring cats, the claw replaces the velvet paw. If he is impulsive by heredity or education, he will strike and exhibit cruelty. This germ of native kindness is very frail; it does not develop naturally, as a healthy plant; social warfare is after all established upon the basis of this gentleness which is wholly egoistic, and is found in the lower animal equally as in the little boy.

Still the germ of altruistic feeling is really there; from the good nature that we desire or demand is born that which we show towards others, but it will flow naturally only

from constant reciprocity. We do not find it everywhere on the road; it is not returned to us. To transform natural egoism into a spirit of responsibility requires prolonged and earnest cultivation. To-day that moral education which should make a child a sociable being, capable of finding his own satisfaction in the good that he does to others, is quite insufficient. The child often retains a certain hardness; one at that age is "without pity"; the young, carried away by ardour and presumption, are not always fair in their judgments, and we may say that the human masses, insufficiently cultivated, morally preserve something of infantile mentality; nothing is more cruel sometimes than what is called a good boy.

Man knows how to be good as long as he gets something in return, or receives at least gratitude; he is good no longer when it becomes a question of sacrificing momentarily his own interests in order to obey an ideal of kindness. I can not repeat often enough that this is because he is near-sighted; he is all for the present and consequently imprudent. He does not see all the good that would result

to himself and to others from a life dominated by feelings of responsibility. If he is a little gifted, he easily recognises the necessity for mutual understanding in the small circle of his relations. Those for whom no friendship, no comradeship exist are rare; we meet with these conditions even among criminals. But the majority of men have not this clear vision, when it becomes a question of extending sympathy to humanity entire in order to widen human groups.

Many people do not scruple to rob a national treasury by stealing from the customs through false declarations. We recognise, it is true, the bad effect upon public fortune, and consequently upon our own interests, if this dissimulation were to be practised by everybody, but we imagine ourselves authorized to defraud the State by the example of others. It is a further logical error that makes us imitate evil instead of following the straight path of a moral idea. True kindness is more clear-sighted; it is only established slowly in human understanding; it grows with moral intelligence, with self-control. It is the fruit of that meditative

thought which, by analyzing the elements of happiness, induces us to seek it, not for the material advantages offered to our appetites, like bait to foolish fish, but in the pursuit of a fine ideal useful to others and to ourselves.

The idea of necessary reciprocity in sentiments that we owe to one another is so natural that it no longer appears as interested calculation; it has all the spontaneity of an innate feeling, of an instinct, like that which creates the social life of an ant-hill. That is why I consider as one of the simplest dicta of reason the idea that we must not do to others what we do not wish them to do to us. Not only do we know it, and understand it, but we feel it. This idea remains clear, even while it is blurred by the intervention of a crowd of mental representations before which we halt, hesitating and troubled. There is continual indecision in our conduct when we have not sufficiently recognised the necessity for an ideal, or when we have not placed it high enough.

The best-gifted individual who looks into himself finds unhappy contradictions; he sees all the difficulties of the way, and that

is why he is not surprised if others, less favored by heredity and education, stumble at these numerous obstacles.

The most absolute indulgence results from a frank comparison of others' faults with one's own. However hideous poor humanity may sometimes appear, one does not forget the brotherly tie that binds men together. He sees his ego so small in the great mass and feels himself exposed to the same mistakes of thought, even while clearer ethical views have preserved him from serious errors. He settles more and more into the feeling of social sympathy, into the need of harmony.

This state of mind of absolute kindliness can be allied to every metaphysical conception. Religion in particular has always preached this love, and it has been realized in many superb works of charity. But men have not sufficiently understood all the healthy indulgence and pity that there are in the work of the Nazarene. They have weighed their passions in the balance of their justice; they have remained hard in their judgment upon others, keeping all the while, like Pharisees, their good opinion of themselves.

Kind feeling is not simple; it is composed of a number of innate and acquired sensibilities which can to-day draw us towards tenderness, to-morrow towards harshness; these various impulses are not pointed in a given direction; even when they determine altruistic conduct, egoism is not absent.

I have said, and I repeat that nothing creates a rational kindness like the idea of determinism, not alone physical, but moral. It is not a question here of that natural necessity, which begins with the primitive nebulæ of savants and rules all movements of matter; nor of the still mental slavery of the animal which obeys only its instincts. Man's reactions from every excitement that attacks him are not simple physiological reflexes; they are psychological. Man thinks, and makes mental representations, from which the feeling that induces him to act is created; he is capable of raising himself to the abstract idea. I do not care whether these phenomena are explained by imagining a soul pinned to a body, or whether it be admitted that thought is directly created from cerebral effort.

Human thought is a fact; there is never a man who has not conceived some moral idea, however defective it may be; not a man who has never obeyed at one time or another a force-idea; mental representations are developed from birth; they are creators of desires and consequently of acts. There is a fund of embryonic morality in us all, by the very reason of ancestral influences; but it does not develop to the point of utility except under educational influences.

We notice here a social inequality more bitter than that between the rich and the poor, the healthy and the sick; it is that which creates what is called the good and the bad. It is terrible, this injustice in the partition of moral intelligence; it plunges into a gulf of sorrow both those it leads to crime and those who suffer for it; it would be cruelty if it condemned these disinherited ones to eternal pain. For my part, I can not conceive of hell, especially when entertaining the idea of a God of kindness. It touched me to hear the joke of a good priest, whom a parishioner had anxiously questioned about hell. "Hell," said he, "yes, yes, there is one; but," he

added in a whisper, "there is never any one there."

However that may be, we know nothing positive about the beyond, and believers may let Providence act as it thinks best; it cannot make a mistake. What is odious is our severity in this world, that crying injustice which consists in considering all men as endowed equally with the same amount of conscience and consequently as equally guilty when they fail to arrive at the goal at the same time as others. It is as if one classed runners according to the time of their arrival, although starting from different points on the track.

Men are always, at the time we observe them, what they are able to be; let us forgive them and provide them with the means to reach the goal with greater chances of success.

I have shown that this view from the start engenders tolerance, kindly indulgence, and respect for human personality. This charitable judgment in regard to others in no wise encourages slackness; the pardon is only for the irrevocable past. It prevents neither re-

gret nor remorse, since we recognise to our cost the error committed; it does not push us towards evil, since the very fault is precisely the occasion for moral elevation.

Kindness is not only the source of sentiments directly altruistic which should regulate our dealings with others, but with its beams discloses hidden virtues, such as humility, moderation of desire, and courage. In this spirit we do not regard them solely from the point of view of personal usefulness; we see in a flash their value for the good of all.

There is no virtue, to speak correctly, for man as a solitary individual in the world; virtue begins only with sociability. All our qualities have their reverberations upon the happiness of our fellow men; they enjoy them, as we enjoy theirs. The idea of responsibility is at the base of all our aspirations towards good. The studies of psychiatrists and neurologists have given the greatest importance to heredity; they have unveiled the mental defects resulting from degeneration in families and races. We must be blind not to recognise the influence of

heredity upon our physical, intellectual, and moral malformations. The physician, like the priest and the teacher, like the poor parents directly affected, daily witness family tragedies caused by the transmission by descent of the mental defects of ancestors.

Here, it is epilepsy which often permanently seizes a child who hitherto has appeared normal; it not only injures his career as a man by a repetition of frightful convulsive fits, but also diminishes his intelligence; it stupefies him, often morally in a pathological egoism, and makes of him a beast with a human face. There it is precocious insanity seizing a young girl in the period of her development; while her parents see with joy the growth of that loving mind, that awakened intelligence, she becomes the prey of obsessions, delirious ideas, hallucinations; she is often obliged to pass her life far from the family circle to which she may remain attached.

To-day it is a savant, a brave man, who unites qualities of heart to intelligence, who sees his son sink into a serious neurasthenic condition, paralyzing activity and compro-

mising his material and moral future, the youth whom his father had joyfully hoped would continue the race. To-morrow, it is a young girl, brought up among moral and cultured surroundings, who by reason of ancestral influences, perhaps difficult to discern, falls into a pathological state of imperfect morality, causing her to lose all sense of modesty; during her whole life it becomes necessary to exercise constant supervision over her; she being deprived of certain moral conceptions.

And in families which, to the eyes of a superficial observer, seem to be spared, we yet notice the disastrous effects of heredity, of atavism, physical malformation, creating real inferiority, imperfect intellect and, what is still more painful, moral blemishes, directing these invalids, if we may so call them, in the path of evil. There is no family in which we cannot discover imperfections of some sort, and we must be thankful if they do not lead to the catastrophes we see daily around us.

Yes, heredity is a terrible yoke; we cannot even rebel against it, so natural and necessary is it. Are we surprised to discover

heredity in the life of plants and animals? Why should it happen that man alone transmits qualities to his descendants?

The egoistical observer, especially when he is exempt, coldly notes these imperfections; he sneeringly watches this limping humanity act. Sensitive and overemotional people suffer cruelly from these inequalities, but remain passive. Kindness has neither this cruelty nor this weakness. It creates courageous initiative and incites those who have charge of souls to repair the perverted intellects, as a skilful gardener knows how to attach stubborn branches to the trellis. And often this virtue, which does not know discouragement, is victorious.

The influence of heredity has been exaggerated; it has too often been thought final, and the fact that it has a powerful antidote in education has not been seen clearly enough.

Doubtless it is not possible to change entirely a personality; it cannot be remoulded. We must be content with correction of the most glaring defects, those which compromise the future of the individual, and prevent him from fulfilling his social duty. Physical de-

fects most frequently remain; one's frame cannot be remade; after the adult age not even one's system of muscles; we must put up with these little and big deformities and physical unfitness.

On the contrary, intelligence is more plastic. It constantly grows; even by the idiot the influence of spiritual orthopædia can be felt. Doubtless, everybody cannot rise to the high regions of thought, and there again we must recognise our weakness without false pride. But there is a domain where culture finds a vast field of activity, in a ground already prepared — that of moral intelligence. This knowledge—Greek intellectualism with reason considered virtue as "knowledge"—is not built upon a scaffold of scientific attainments, upon a book culture accessible only to the privileged; it is based upon common sense, and this common sense improves and increases as it is used. It is found among beings apparently the most ill-favoured, but it must be sought out and, so to speak, created, and it is always kindness that can discover hidden qualities. It makes people intelligent, because it considers them as

such; it makes them good; it gives them self-confidence and a conviction of power.

To arrive at this restoration, we must quickly forget the defective past; we repulse the person we wish to help when we reproach him harshly. On the contrary, we must credit him with our confidence and point out that he can do well, that he can obey reasonable impulses when he will recognise their justice.

It is a work of love, which is only possible through that sympathy which all other virtues engenders, to such an extent that we might say: "There is only one virtue, kindness."

XVIII

IDEALISM

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IDEALISM

When I was a youngster I overheard conversations between gentlemen, and learned that there were two classes among men—conservatives, who monopolized riches and honours, egotistical in their pharisaical respectability, enemies of all progress; and radicals, frank and loyal natures, fighting against all tyrannies, pioneers of progress in every field. I have revised this judgment, for I had no trouble in seeing that these "reds" did not monopolize all the civic and private virtues, and the relations that I had with those terrible conservatives showed me they were not worse than others. I found among the latter many noble souls, and liberal minds, accessible to every generous idea, and I concluded that we must not attach much importance to labels.

Later, when a young man, I heard of new distinctions. The world appeared to me to be divided into two camps—"spiritualists," who were usually believers, guardians of the

ideal, paladins of virtue, and "materialists," who were coarse individuals, who thought only of material pleasures. Men agreed, it is true, to make a distinction between materialists of manners and positivist scholars, who, they said, inconsistently allied a worthy life with subversive theories. I heard the names of August Comte, Littré, John Stuart Mill, Büchner, Moleschott, and Karl Vogt cited with terror mingled with respect.

Again I had quickly to erase the fallacious labels and judge individuals without bothering about distinctions. On the one side, I quickly saw how inefficacious was this spirituality among its sponsors; on the other side, I noticed that positivist scholars, materialistic monists, could raise aloft the banner of the moral ideal and conform their lives to it.

There is no quarrel more useless than the ever-recurrent one between "spiritualists" and "materialists," the "dualists" and the "monists." It has as little importance for us as the battle of the Horatii and the Curatü.

Let us explain ourselves.

If we study man without prejudice, and as

much by objective examination of others as by introspection, we notice that his body is analogous to that of the animal, that it is a material substance we can touch and submit to anatomical and chemical analysis. It is composed of innumerable cells, always more varied as we ascend the scale of the animal series. Each of our cells lives; that is to say, it reacts under the influence of natural stimuli, such as light, sound, sapid and odoriferous substances, and mechanical excitations; these natural excitations may be replaced by artificial ones, especially by electricity, capable under various forms of making active our several organs. The muscle, which normally contracts under the influence of what is commonly called the will, reacts equally from a shock, from electrical or chemical excitation.

Nothing is more material than all these cellular reactions, this transmission of vibrations from organ to organ by the path of the nerves; we can calculate the speed, as if a simple electric current, or the current of a river, were in question: it is about twenty yards to the second.

This physiology is common to all animated beings, from the lowest protozoan to man; it is bound without transition to the phenomena of feeling and the contractibility of plants. Thus far the world is necessarily materialistic and recognises in all these phenomena a reaction of matter, although we do not yet grasp all the conditions which give the cell the faculty to react from various stimuli; however, we regard them as being mechanical in nature, like those forces which produce chemical compositions and decompositions.

But in the middle of this material life, we discover in man, and even in animals, a whole series of phenomena less accessible to analysis. So we are obliged to lay down the scalpel, abandon the physiological apparatus destined to bring about reaction, in order to measure the stimulus or the effect produced. Although we can replace will, considered as an instigating agent of muscular contraction, by a current of electricity, we are incapable of creating by artificial stimuli an idea, a sentiment. We are here in the domain of psychology.

The science called "physiological psychol-

ogy'' has attempted to apply to the study of these mental phenomena the results of research in physiology; it has succeeded in obtaining certain dimensions, in establishing some laws, still very uncertain; it has especially tried, by way of statistics, to establish the laws of the association of ideas in simple situations reproduced in experimental conditions. But there is a gulf between this psychology of laboratories and that exhibited in the most trifling conversation.

However far this scientific and objective psychology may lead us, we always return to introspection, to self-analysis, which is evidently subject to error, though necessary.

In his ''Mélanges Philosophiques,'' M. d'Hulst writes: ''I would call soul the thinking part of myself,'' and he adds: ''Whether he be a materialist, idealist, or positivist, no philosopher could dispute this meaning.'' Exactly, but this thought is still, as I hope I have shown, only the reaction of stimuli outside the thinking and sentient ego. It is true that it is a special reaction which escapes our methods of physiological investigation. From this we have concluded that there is a

definite irreducibleness between phenomena of conscience and the cerebral work which always accompanies them; this is cutting short all research by an affirmation without proof.

Indeed, we have yet no clear views upon the nexus which as defined by our philosopher-prelate, unites the soul to the material body, which we know better. But we go too far when we call it "immaterial substance" and claim this soul for man, and want it immortal, while the body returns to dust. We consider the soul noble and the body base; we cry scandal when somebody dares to utter the hypothesis that these psychical phenomena may be only the especial reaction of certain cells organized for mental life, the cells of the brain.

We forget that the animal also has a mind that in him passes through a whole series of mental phenomena quite as irreducible to our actual knowledge and to the laws of material physiology. From this point of view, it would seem also to claim for him, in a certain measure, immortality for this thinking "immaterial substance."

The animal thinks, loves, and suffers. I know all the distance that separates the mentality of the brute from the spiritual life of man. The animal reacts more simply, obeys the impulses of his feelings, of his instincts; he lives according to nature and succeeds in that better than we do. It is only in man that we find conscience developed from what passes within him, the faculty of reacting, not on simple physiological excitations, but on mental representations. He alone is capable of analyzing, of inwardly observing, of raising himself to the abstract idea; he alone obeys moral laws which he adopts when he has learned the advantages that virtue and happiness offer.

To my way of thinking, if we wish to be spiritualistic, we must stretch this duality of body and spirit to the whole animal series, or at least to higher animals in which we see signs of the elements of logic, a certain reason, in which sentiments appear. However defective, it is a psychical life that we notice in them, and it is quite astonishing to see a dog think like a man, thought being precisely what we find irreducible.

Believers, who attribute creation to an all-powerful personal God, seem to me a little overweening in limiting that power. They profess that this God could only construct the human marvel by associating two heterogeneous elements, the soul and the body. They therefore refuse Him another power, that of producing what we call thought from the operations of organs constructed for the purpose; I should have more confidence in His omnipotence. They also allow themselves a criticism which appears to me out of place towards Providence, by disdaining the body, in considering it inferior, in giving complete supremacy to that abstraction we call the soul.

The biologist looks at things in another way. For him, man is one, he is a material organism. The cells of which he is composed have their especial rôles; some contract, others secrete. The nerves transmit the vibrations, still unknown in its essence, called the nervous wave. The brain is the organ of thought. It receives numerous excitations from without, and within the latter they are transformed into mental pictures, without our

knowing how. We join them together when we perceive them by that insight which is our conscience. This is a phenomenon still unexplained, though sure, and which differentiates not man alone, but the animal, from a simple machine.

Taine and Karl Vogt have used very coarse and false examples, the one saying, "The soul is a product like sugar or vitriol"; the other, "The brain secretes thoughts as the liver secretes bile."

As a result of chemical reactions, we get the material products sugar and vitriol, while thought is, so to speak, functioning power made conscious; a machine which was conscious of the product that it distilled would have a soul. The liver is not conscious of its secretion; it is a work of pure chemistry.

Is the difficulty that we have in conceiving thought, in understanding its mechanism or essence, a reason for admitting two substances thoroughly distinct—the one material and perishable, the other immaterial and immortal? I do not think so, and in any case it would only be an hypothesis.

Spiritualism and materialism, or, as we say nowadays, dualism and monism, are merely human attempts to express the fact of thought. Before the unknown, all suppositions are allowable, and both sides must renounce mutually convincing each other of error. If the conception of materialistic monism is rejected by the official church as contrary to its dogmas, it shares this misfortune with many other ancient and modern ideas which continue to live. Besides, it is in no way incompatible with a monotheistic belief. Certain apostles have regarded man in his unity and have believed in the resurrection of the body.

Between dualism and monism there is not that radical antinomy which we persist in claiming, and which makes enemies of their respective partisans. These are not doctrines on which we must take sides; they are merely attempts to interpret phenomena which we all observe, without being able to unveil the secret of their existence.

We all form opinions about the troublesome problems of life; these opinions vary according to individuals, especially according

to the education received in childhood and to the studies that we have taken up. Let us beware of decorating them with the name of truths; it is only a question of hypothesis, and we might end these discussions, which man always finds interesting, by an admission: that after all neither we nor the others know anything about it.

St. Paul said, "Circumcision is nothing; uncircumcision is nothing: to keep the commandments of God is everything." We might equally say, "Spiritualism is nothing; materialism is nothing: to live a worthy life, working for the good of all, is everything." During the periods of our existence in which we are happy—when we have youth and health— we are indifferent to these questions. Opposition disappears, and we might say, "Neither believers, nor freethinkers, everybody happy," but everything changes before adversity, suffering, and death. Man then feels his weakness; he trembles and, like the shipwrecked, seeks a plank for safety.

Where does he find this saving help? Always in conceptions destined to raise his courage, to push him towards the fight with

a healthy confidence in success. Man is never sustained in this wholly spiritual struggle except by an idea. Where does he find it? In his innate and acquired mentality. I have shown that it is the product of education, influencing variously gifted individuals.

There are gentle and loving souls and, dare I say, somewhat timorous ones, who are frightened at the littleness of man in the midst of the universe. They are like the child who, in the thousand dangers of the forest, anxiously seeks the hand of his father.

Brought up from the tenderest age in religious convictions, these believers put all their hope in divine protection upon this earth and in the promise of a future life. Their conduct, inasmuch as they are sincere, is a joyful obedience to the orders of a Father who constantly watches over them. They feel secure in His hands and console themselves for present misfortune by the hope of eternal compensation.

When this coal-hole faith takes possession of the minds of persons little developed from an intellectual point of view, it easily results in superstition, in a surface religion only

manifesting itself by practices of worship, and creates intolerance. Women, whose minds are less apt to reason and less educated to logic, easily fall into this defect. In other minds—they are not legion—religion creates a true Christian stoicism, which enables them to accept happiness and suffering as the gift of God. This belief is then a force, like a flag which awakens our enthusiasm. We must also recognise that very great minds, inured to scientific work, capable of being raised to the height of philosophical thought, have remained attached to religious convictions, or have returned to them after having abandoned them, and we delight in repeating the saying of one of them: "A little science diverts us from religion; much science brings us back to it." It is rarely to official religion, with all its dogmas, that this mental revival of scholars, having shed their eruption of juvenile scepticism, returns; it is to a deism more or less precise, varying from monotheism to the vaguest pantheism. Among the moralists of Emerson's school, the word God recurs at each page, but it might be replaced by that of Nature.

I understand that, in view of this marvellous universe, we seek a cause, we admit an Author of everything, let us bow down to Him and before the ideal of virtue that He exacts from His creatures. From that to rendering Him worship is only a step, although this need of manifestation appears to me a fetich. The more man is able to live a life of the spirit, the more he is raised to the pure idea and feels himself guided by it without having need of outward demonstrations. Enlightened patriotism has no need of a material flag, of noisy popular demonstrations; it is at the bottom of the soul, ready to let loose every energy. Crowds, which think less, remain more subject to suggestion; we make them march by music and the drum; they yield to the sway of the tribune. The inconvenience is not serious when the direction is good; but this mental passivity can also mislead.

It is evident that a religion of spirit, inducing a continual effort to live well, has immense force, and we would like to see more real effects among individuals who call themselves religious. It is impossible to bring

convincing arguments against beliefs. There is too much unknown in life for us to be able to say to these freethinkers, "You are wrong." We must bow before a sincere and determined conviction. But there are beings who continually need logic, and who cannot put the seal of reality upon what they consider as hypothesis. They are struck above all with the insolubility of the problem, with the impossibility for man to grasp the first causes in this universe, where he distinguishes only reactions. They cannot accept from other men, however worthy of confidence they may be, ready-made solutions, the framework of revelations, the metaphysical arguments of scholars. They preserve an incurable scepticism in regard to opinions lacking in proof; it would be very hard to prove that they are wrong.

In this world we are deprived of certain facts about the mystery of our existence. We know rationally neither whence we came nor where we are going. The only assured fact is that we exist—in spite of philosophers who are not very sure of it—that we humans inhabit a planet always in movement in the

midst of still larger worlds. Is not the situation analogous to that of soldiers campaigning in a foreign country, neither knowing the object of the expedition, nor how it will end? The ships that brought them have gone away. What must they do? Nothing but watch over the success of the campaign and get the best possible out of it. At first, they will take care of their material comfort, sheltering themselves from bad weather and assuring themselves of their food. Even in this existence, which appears so commonplace, there is room for altruistic sentiments; soldiers work for their comrades, for the regiment. They know very well that, by giving themselves up to egoism, they will excite it in others, and that would mean a rout in the face of the enemy.

A bond of responsibility is naturally established between these men. It has been said that war, in spite of its horrors, is desirable because it is an occasion for sacrifice. Indeed, the soldier, in the hours of battle, does not obey common suggestions of material interest; he thinks of others, of his companions, of his country, towards which he recognises his duty. He feels compassion for the suf-

fering of others, spontaneously, without consciously analyzing the idea that reciprocity is necessarily at the bottom of charitable feelings. Alas, it needs grief to create them! Rousseau was right in not sparing suffering to his son Émile, saying: "The man who does not know pain will neither know the tenderness of humanity nor the sweetness of commiseration; nothing will stir his heart; he will not be sociable; he will be a monster among his fellow men." In that altruism, founded upon logical facts, so simple that it appears spontaneous, the soldier will do his duty as thoroughly as if he understood the diplomatic reasons which induced his government to undertake the campaign, or as if he knew in advance the issue of it. Little matters to him the knowledge of final intentions; his task is more modest; he has only to behave well. It is the same with the thinker whose observation of the world leads to agnosticism, and who gives up agitating questions which from the start appear to him insoluble. He neither worries about the beginning nor the end. He has only to do his duty; that is, seek his and others' happiness.

I have tried to show how altruistic feelings are created by rational mental representations and lead us to find a guide in a moral ideal. That is the efficacious spiritualism we need; to avoid all confusion, I will call it idealism. It matters little that our opinions differ upon insoluble subjects of metaphysics, that we explain by dualistic or monistic theories phenomena whose essence escapes us; the important thing is to seek happiness in the realization of our ideal.

That ideal remains the same, whether it be granted as a guide to heaven, by a Providence who created us and watches over our lot, or whether we build up this code by force of pure thought; the essential thing is to remain true to it. That is why I find vain these eternal quarrels, as old as philosophy. Let men become always less materialistic in their customs, always more moral, idealistic; let them believe in the soul, no longer as an immaterial substance, but as a property of our being, enabling us to conceive the Good, the Beautiful, and the True!

Those who, by reason of hereditary defects and the conditions of their education, cannot

raise themselves to this morality, create unhappiness for themselves, and, alas, sow it around them! Others, who have the luck to be better gifted, become increasingly enamoured of these governing ideas, and, according as they are able to approach that ideal, create happiness for others at the same time as they create their own.

Let us think over those fine words of Dora Melegari: "Ancient psychology had a dogmatic way of dividing men into good and bad, sages and fools, strong and weak, pure and impure, atheists and believers; it had too many shades or too few! Would it not be more practical and true henceforth to divide them into two categories, corresponding to the tendency to which the future points: makers of sorrow and makers of joy?"

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